THE GOSPEL AND THE MODERN MAN

SHAILER MATHEWS

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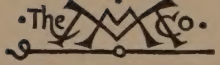

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THE GOSPEL AND THE MODERN MAN

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BY

SHAILER MATHEWS

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PART I

THE PROBLEM OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER I

THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Is the gospel of the New Testament to be "the power of God unto salvation" for the modern man? Or must it be replaced by a philosophy of religious values that reduces the historical Jesus to a creature of the unwarranted faith of Galilean fishermen, and changes the church into a polite audience listening to discussions of social reform?

These questions are not merely rhetorical. Christianity was founded upon the Christ of the New Testament. The history of the church is the history of an attempt to make that Christ the inspiration for Godlike living and the basis of an assurance of divine forgiveness. Philosophies have come and

gone, theologies have been supplanted by newer doctrines, but the gospel of a way of salvation revealed by a real Jesus has been the perennial source of constructive Christian experience. Now, however, we are told that the gospel in its original New Testament sense cannot be combined with the other beliefs of modern men and is to be replaced by some religious message more consonant with modern thinking. We can see on all sides tendencies which promise the fulfillment of this prophecy. We do well, therefore, to raise the question frankly whether the modern man's attitude towards evangelical Christianity must be essentially skeptical and negative, and whether the gospel can be truly a force in our modern world.

The situation is as critical for the church as for the modern world. Unless the gospel can control the formative men of to-day, it will require more than one generation to regain the ground Christianity will lose. The gospel, it is true, will remain the possession of the theologically simple minded; it will continue to furnish the individualistic morality of our common life; but it will not keep men and women who have come under the influence of the truly modern world from pessimism, moral indifference, and the practice and philosophy of force. The

church needs these formative lives. Society needs them even more. Evangelized leaders are as indispensable as evangelized masses. If without their influence the church will grow intellectually and socially flaccid, without their power to infuse the gospel into social transformation society will grow materialistic. For a man, even though he be rich and learned and formative, needs to be saved. And a social order, even though it build transcontinental railroads and turn its forests into books, needs to be made the kingdom of God.

I

At the very outset of our discussion we are confronted by the question of method. Where shall the gospel be found? Modern Christianity as a religion is an historically developed system of doctrines, each the product of a particular period. Far more than the non-technical student of our religion is aware, this body of dogma is the common property of all Christendom. It is embodied in the various symbols of Protestantism, but Protestants gained it from the Roman church; the Roman church and the Greek church as well drew it from those ecumenical councils which recall not only the world-wide controversies they sought to settle, but also the

time when all Christians were at one except as they were heretics or schismatics.

Although ecumenical theology is derived from scriptural teachings, it need only be read in the creeds of Constantinople and Chalcedon to be recognized as something different from the gospel of the New Testament. Every word of the creedal sentences is a shibboleth intended to separate some independent thinker or school of thinkers from the Catholic church. But is this Christianity the religion of Christ? And is it to be the starting point of that theological reconstruction we are all but unanimously agreed must be undertaken if our rapidly growing educated class is to be kept loyal to the church? No questions are discussed more earnestly or with more learning. And the more we know of what might be called the natural history of this Christianity of ecclesiastical authority, the more are we convinced that it is the descendant of a numerous ancestry of which the gospel of the New Testament is only one member. In our inherited *corpus* of doctrine we can see the survivals of Greek philosophy, Roman distrust of logical thoroughness, the rites and mysteries of an orientalized Græco-Roman world, mediæval politics, and even the traces of Indian theosophy and asceticism.

This is not to say that such eclecticism and solidifi-

cation of religious survivals into a religion nucleated around the gospel could have been avoided, or that on the whole it is to be lamented. For my part I cannot see how the gospel ever could have become the religion of a Hellenized civilization without being clothed in Greek concepts. Nor could it have become a power in the mediæval world except it had been expressed in mediæval terms and methods. The only thing that need here concern us beyond the undeniable fact that dogma has a pedigree is the question as to whether such a theological system shall be our point of departure. In a search for the method by which the gospel can be made more influential in our modern world, shall we recast inherited beliefs, or shall we begin with the New Testament itself, and, as it were, repeat in our own day the process by which the gospel has always been brought into intellectual harmony and expression in earlier periods?

I have no hesitation in declaring for the second alternative.

The study of the history of doctrine is illuminating if a man would gain a conception of the actual situation created by orthodoxy to which he must adjust his own message. It is helpful in developing religious interest and theological balance; it is indispensable as indicating the process by which we may bring

the gospel to our modern life. But it is not a point of departure for theological reconstruction. The great demand to-day is not for a manipulation of our inherited theology into some form more acceptable to our modern ways of thinking. It is rather for a frank disregard of inherited dogma except by way of historical evaluation and a return to the primitive gospel itself; to the gospel that founded Christianity, conquered the Roman Empire, and embodies the continuous realities of the spiritual life. True, the apperceptive mass of doctrine — if the expression may be pardoned — is one element in the situation to which the gospel must be presented in that it affects the method of presentation, and suggests caution in adopting a radical program of illumination. But this mass of doctrine does not constitute in itself the substance of a truly spiritual Christianity. A sense of the truth of this assertion is the real cause of the widespread demand to "go back to Christ," or, rather, to bring Christ back to us. Inherited orthodoxy is so colored by outgrown philosophies, prescientific conceptions, outgrown political ideals and prejudices, as to be unusable by many an earnest man and woman. To remodel the old house is more expensive than to tear it down and use such materials of it as are sound in erecting a new building.

Here is one characteristic of a positive, evangelical theology: it uses the material which theologies of the past have employed. It would throw away nothing which its analysis of the doctrinal development may discover to be more than concepts used to interpret eternal realities to a given age. But it starts with the strictly evangelic data which have been worked into the *corpus* of doctrine, rather than with that *corpus* itself. It would use the bits of glass of the mosaic figure, but it would not seek above all to preserve the figure.

II

What then is that gospel of the New Testament which we would bring to our modern world?

Sometimes we speak of it as if it were the Sermon on the Mount, or some philosophy of religion, or some general message about deliverance in Heaven. There is truth in each of these conceptions, for each embodies some aspect or implication of the gospel; but the definition which we seek is not in any of them. If we would formulate the gospel with precision, we must place ourselves back at the moment when Christianity was first preached as a distinctive message. Our method must be historical, not dogmatic.

1. In the Synoptic Gospels we find the gospel as

first announced, a message of the approaching fulfillment of a religious-social hope — the establishment of God's own kingdom through one whom God had appointed and empowered for the task. John the Baptist did not undertake to define what was meant by Christ or the kingdom or the Day of Judgment. He appealed to the definite expectations of those to whom he spoke. His emphasis was not laid upon a new doctrine, but on the fulfillment of the noblest hope of Judaism. God was about to act. The Judge was at the doors. The Christ, although they did not know him, was already in the midst of the people whom he would deliver. To prepare themselves for his Day and his new kingdom, men had only to repent, be baptized, and live a life of social helpfulness.

When Jesus took up the work which John was forced to abandon, he began with the same message: The kingdom of God is at hand. Men were to believe that message. But while with John the expectation was centered on the Day of Judgment with which the kingdom was to be inaugurated, with Jesus it was centered upon the deliverance which was to be accomplished. It was good news — the gospel. Therein he changed a negative to a positive hope.

Jesus was, however, not content to announce that

the prayer for national deliverance was about to be answered. He knew that God's deliverance could not be national and ethnic, but was to be personal and social. The kingdom which God was to establish could be enjoyed only by those who were like its King. Thus there grew up his exposition of himself as the Son of Man, the embodiment of the ideal life, and the proclamation of the conditions under which this life is to be lived in an evil world.

Four joyous truths combined to make the message which he delivered; God can be trusted as a Father to save his children from Satan, sin, and death; the kingdom of God is a certain and supreme good for those who seek forgiveness of the Father; eternal life is a life of love, in quality like that of God; and this divine life is revealed in Jesus himself, as a forgiving ministry of love to others, even though that ministry brings loss and death.

It is difficult to say which of these four elements is the more important, but as the substance of an evangelical message the last was the more characteristic of the religion which Jesus inaugurated. The original gospel of Jesus was the product of a life-process — the self-revelation of its author. He was living the life of the Spirit. Distressed by circumstance though he was, he was the type of that kingdom

which was to come. His teachings were not the result of speculation but of experience. To believe his teaching as to the Fatherliness of God, the supremacy of righteousness, faith, and love, was to listen to exposition of the supreme values of life by one who was able to make them supreme in his own living. For a man to make them controlling in one's own life was to be morally like Jesus, possessed like him of a joyous, emancipating trust in the Father and a self-sacrificing love for men. As Jesus himself declared, it was to be perfect like God. The sense of union which Jesus had with God was the source of the Truth which was to be men's Way to Life. Whether or not they used the term, when men believed this they believed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

The program, if we may use such a term, in which Jesus set forth this spiritual deliverance born of a unique experience of God was to a considerable extent the messianic hope of the Pharisees, but that program is never obtrusive in his teaching. The early Christians attributed to him certain messianic expressions which he himself probably never used, at least in the precise form in which they stand in the New Testament and in the other early Christian writings; but it is not difficult for a thoroughly

objective criticism to dissociate such words from those which were really his. Apocalyptic his teachings indubitably were, but it is possible to distort and overemphasize the importance of this element. The kingdom of God was still future, but he, its founder and herald, was present and its spiritual life could be lived in untoward surroundings if men only dared. If he expected the kingdom would be established by catastrophe — and after all legitimate allowance is made for apostolic coloring in the reports of his words it is not improbable that this was in his expectations — such a catastrophe was not central in his teachings. Indeed it all but disappears before an impartial criticism of the sources. He looked across the chasm that separated the two ages recognized by current messianism, and centered the thought of his followers on the present forgiving love of God, the new social order the Father would establish, the freedom, the love, the joyousness by which it was to be characterized. This new sort of life, the Age- or eternal-life, he embodied and sought so to describe that his followers might seek and gain it. The eschatological pictures which we find in Jewish literature, like the Book of Enoch and the other apocalypses, were not the content, but the clothing of his message. They might all be omitted and his teaching would

still be the richest of all the sages. To change the figure, they were the point of contact, or rather the point of departure, of his teaching.

But one thing cannot be overlooked by any unprejudiced interpreter: Jesus believed that he was the Christ. Not the Christ in the strictly Jewish sense that in the future he would establish Judaism and judge the nations, but in the deeper sense that he saw himself embodying the very heart of a redemptive, regenerating God. The spirit of the Lord was upon him, empowering him to minister to the needs of those who needed divine assistance and to save those who needed to be delivered from Satan, sin, and death.

2. When one passes from the teaching of Jesus to that of the apostles, he is conscious of a change of atmosphere. That which was secondary or implicit in the teaching of Jesus becomes prominent with Peter and Paul. Jesus was Christ the Lord. That was the simple creed of the first Christians, grounded not only on their acquaintance with Jesus, but on their experience of the Spirit, and primarily upon Jesus' character, power, and resurrection from the dead. Once having recognized in him this messianic value, like true children of their time they forecast his future in its light. His earthly life became of less importance as they compared it with the future. Its

supreme humiliation was not that merely of poverty, defeat, and death. It was also the humiliation of a heavenly being who humbled himself to be a man and sufferer. Yet even thus he had been the one who was to deliver Israel. Although his real messianic work was yet in the future, it was daily drawing nearer. At any moment they believed the trumpet might sound, the dead rise from Sheol, the Judgment Seat be established, the New Jerusalem descend from Heaven, the Christ conquer his enemies, and his church be called to an eternity of bliss. Because they believed him to be thus superhuman, they worshiped him as the Lord of their lives and their future. Their gospel thus did not center about a dead, defeated Jesus, but about the triumphant, triumph-sharing Christ. It was a message not of the finality of suffering and self-repression, but of the supremacy of the spiritual surplus of the Christlike life.

For those who look at the central rather than the outer elements of the thought of both Jesus and Paul, there is no divergence sufficient to break an essential unity in this elaboration of the gospel. To both alike it is a message of a personal and social salvation revealed and wrought through Jesus by God. If we analyze Paul's message as it appears or is involved in his writings, the messianic work which was to be

accomplished by Jesus the Christ was the same as that expected by all the early Christians, a divine deliverance from the same three great and terrible enemies we find in the teaching of Jesus: from Satan, who had established his kingdom in the world and who was bringing misery of all sorts upon men, both bad and good alike; from Sin, that half-personified principle which held humanity in its power because humanity began in sinful Adam, and which no man could escape because all men were "carnal"; and from death, the horror of which ran throughout all Jewish life.

This message of deliverance involved many subordinate matters. Time was divided into two ages: the first, in which the Prince of Evil reigned, and the followers of Christ were to expect sorrow; the second the Age which was to come in which Christ would establish the kingdom of God — an age in which the wicked were to suffer and the righteous were to be happy. This new age was to be ushered in by the Day of Judgment. The writers of the Jewish apocalypses described this awful day in detail and it was no less real to the early church. But with this difference: the apostles, like Jesus, made the basis of eternal destinies then to be fixed, not one of Jewish or Gentile birth, but rather the actual possession of the sort of

life which could make membership in the kingdom possible. With the Christian the message of the judgment was fundamentally a message of deliverance by transformation of the individual by God's Spirit into the likeness of Jesus. The man who had accepted Jesus as Christ and had consequently received the spirit of Christ into his soul awaited calmly this day of terror to others. He was already acquitted. The Judge was his Savior, in whom he trusted. Death would separate him from the flesh, the agent of sin, and the resurrection was to save him from both Satan and death. The certainty of this triumph was assured by the incontestable experience born of faith in the goodness of God, and by the historic fact that the Jesus who had embodied this life of the Spirit had shown the way to the divine threefold deliverance.

It is only a hasty estimate that fails to see that the deliverance thus foretold by both Jesus and Paul is positive rather than negative, ethical rather than magical. Although in its complete sense it was yet future, germinantly it was already a present possession. Salvation did not mechanically come to a man; he waited, a new creation, for the coming kingdom. Satan might buffet, but Satan could bring only temporary sorrow; his age was about to end.

Death might come, but death had been overcome; those who possessed the spirit of the God who had raised Christ from the dead, already possessed an eternal life like that of Jesus. An evil age might bring Christians suffering, but their Master had overcome the age. His followers, living as best they could a life like that of their great King, could well endure the miseries of an evil age. They, if not their present comfort, were safe.

3. At this point, however, we confront a question which has been elevated into great prominence in recent New Testament study. It is the very simple question as to whether there is more than one gospel in the New Testament. Or, to put it more specifically, did Jesus give us the gospel and did Paul give us a new religion — Christianity? Such a question will seem to many a man as irrelevant, if not worse. Orthodox Christianity in its formulation did not recognize the methods of modern Biblical theology. It started with the Bible rather than the distinctive messages of the various writers of the Bible; least of all did it distinguish between those of Jesus and Paul. Any examination of theological treatises will show that their writers have never hesitated to combine any sentences from different parts of the Bible which seem in any way to agree, and on the

basis of their combined teaching to formulate dogmas. In this way there has grown up a Christian theology based upon an uncritical combination of material. In cases where such material has not been readily combined the inconsistencies of various texts have been evaded or removed by exegetical ingenuity ranging from the allegories of the early church Fathers to the formulations of councils.

It is a characteristic of our modern study, however, that it treats the Bible analytically. Instead of treating it as an integral book, it compares the teachings of its different authors and attempts to point out similarities and differences in their development. In the case of Jesus and Paul it was very natural that this should at first tend to magnify the differences between the simple, unphilosophical, joyously creative religious message of Jesus and the elaborated systemizations of Paul. With some interpreters such differences become the controlling factors in interpretation. In their opinion Paul in comparison with Jesus is an absolutely new phenomenon. His theology is not determined by a picture of Jesus' life and in it we can find little of the gospel which Jesus taught. "That which was everything to Paul was nothing to Jesus." In Jesus we have a call to men to submit their souls to God and His will.

In Paul whoever believes in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus as a Divine Being can obtain salvation. Even in the case of less radical scholars a pronounced difference is found between the Master and the apostle,—a difference between "the voluntary and immediate apprehension of God's love in childlike confidence, and the belief that man may venture to approach God, because God Himself has offered the necessary sacrifice upon the cross of Christ."

The extent to which the self-consciousness of Jesus varies from the interpretation placed upon him by Paul must be considered later. At this point it is necessary only to consider the main question already raised as to whether there are two gospels. The reply to this is immediate in the words of Paul to the Galatians: "There is no gospel of any other sort or kind." The contrast between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul is, of course, apparent to every reader of the New Testament, but it is not a difference in fundamental character. It consists rather in the case of Paul of the exposition of the significance of the person of Jesus and of the salvation wrought by him in terms that made it applicable and tenable among the Christians of his own day. The champions of the view that sharply distinguish Paulinism from

the message of Jesus have failed to distinguish between two processes in the apostle's preaching, — the evangelistic, which we find set forth in the Book of Acts, the historicity of which is daily becoming increasingly recognized; and the educational, directed to those who have already accepted Jesus as Christ and who need to be taught loyalty to their new spiritual experience. Paul certainly was far more informed as to the historical Jesus than those who insist upon his fundamental divergence from his Master are ready to admit. But his great effort in writing to Christians was not to do that which such Ministers of the Word as Mark were capable of doing, but rather to apply the gospel to the exigencies of the human experience, and to defend it from the attacks of those who sought to ingulf it in Judaism or some gnostic speculation. The difference between Jesus and Paul at this point is that between the formulation of the imperatives of religious faith and the theology of religious experience. In so far as the theologians of the schools have been swayed by the perception of the fundamental identities which bind together these two stages of religious teaching, they have been justified in combining the material that has come from Jesus and from Paul.

Nor is it possible to rule out of court this funda-

mental agreement in the redemption messages of Paul and of Jesus by asserting that the Synoptic Gospels as they stand to-day are the products of Paulinism. Such a method is altogether too easy and too *a priori*. To say that whenever the Jesus of the Synoptics and the Jesus of Paul agree it is because the writers of these early gospels have been influenced by Paul is a begging of the question as naïve as is alleged by some to be found in traditional orthodoxy itself. The central message of Jesus is the central message of Paul, however much the apostle may have elaborated and adjusted that message to local needs.

But we may go one step farther. Such an elaboration of the systematic relations of the gospel as Paul has given was imperatively demanded by the exigencies of thought itself. No man is able to leave religion uncorrelated with his experience. There are too many fundamental questions that he must answer. And unless the thinking of the centuries has been incredibly artificial, the questions which Paul raised concerning the relation of God's deliverance as revealed in and accomplished by Jesus with such problems as its dependence on Judaism, death, human history, the moral order of the universe, and the future of the individual, to say nothing of its relation to moral construction, are precisely those which

a man of any epoch must face and answer. And in answering such questions he will inevitably follow the same method as that adopted by Paul himself. He will answer them in view of the person, the idealism, the death and the resurrection of Jesus, and in the terms of his own age.

4. One point, however, still remains to be considered. It is that to which we must repeatedly recur, namely, the relative importance of the apparatus by which Paul and, to some extent, Jesus himself set forth the significance of the gospel: that is to say, the forms of thought furnished by the apocalyptic thought of New Testament times.

Here again we must postpone any complete discussion, but in view of present tendencies it should be said that every interpreter must give large latitude to his treatment of all apocalyptic forecasts. The modern man has little of that instinctive sympathy with symbolism which pervades early Christian thought. The apocalypse, like prophecy, is essentially poetic. It is a lamentable exegetical method that sees in its pictures any attempt at scientific accuracy. It is, of course, a fair question as to just how far the authors, and particularly the first readers, of these apocalypses regarded them as figurative, for a distinction between the literal and the pictorial is always

hard to draw in Jewish thought. The genius of Hebraism was unanalytic, with a constant tendency toward solidifying qualities into quantities, just as the Greek thought was constantly tending to abstract general conceptions from concrete experience. The Hebrew language, for instance, lacks adjectives; nouns must serve in their place. Figures of speech, even of the most abstract sort, steadily tended toward personification. The word and the wisdom of Jehovah became subordinate mediators between him and his world. Yet on the other hand, concrete realities were constantly used in relations which show that their use was symbolic. Isaiah represents an angel as bringing a hot coal from the altar, placing it upon the prophet's tongue, and then bidding him to speak. It is impossible and absurd to place many of the pictures of the messianic age in precise scientific categories. Just as the rabbis, looking back, described the Golden Age of pharisaism under Alexandra as the time when a grain of wheat was as large as a kidney, did the apocalyptists describe the vineyards of the messianic age as producing bunches of grapes yielding hogsheads of wine. No Jew would be deceived by such figures. They would symbolize to him the boundless fertility of the soil under the blessings of Jehovah. So even more clearly in the

case of such figures as we find in the Book of Daniel, the Enoch literature, and the Apocalypse of John. Symbolism is there self-evident.

For these reasons the modern interpreter must be slow to apply too rigorous methods to the apocalyptic hopes of the early Christian. On the one hand he cannot draw the line with precision between that which is to be taken literally and that which is to be taken figuratively, but on the other hand he cannot safely say that symbolism is not present in all apocalyptic figures. He must not overestimate the tendency towards realism. To Jew and early Christian alike the reality which these apocalypses contained was more than that of the picture themselves. There is symbolism in the cubical shape of the heavenly Jerusalem and in the Son of man coming in the clouds as truly as in the beast and his mark.

But eschatology must not be banished with its pictures. Any interpretation in a truly historical spirit will seek to recover that contained within them, no matter how literally they may have been taken by certain interpreters, for eschatology, as will presently appear, is part of the content of the gospel. In thus interpreting apocalyptic imagery the student will be simply following the indications of the writers themselves who bid those who "read,

understand." And, as will appear later, not the least important among the hopes contained in eschatological programs is that of a social order, which though not to come by observation or effort, would be no less real because it was to be introduced by God.

III

This message of a divinely accomplished deliverance preached by the founders of the church claims to be based on historical facts. That is evident on every page of the New Testament. But this is altogether too general a statement. To be precise we must recognize that the gospel is historical in two senses; in that it is, first, a record of experiences, and, second, an interpretation of that experience in accordance with the concepts of a definite historical period.

1. In the first place, the gospel is identified with definite historical experiences. Primarily, of course, these experiences are those of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. I do not raise the question as to whether every detail in the New Testament accounts is susceptible of confirmation, nor the larger question as to whether all those deeds and words attributed to him by Christian centuries are genuinely his. But this I would emphasize: the gospel as it stands in the

New Testament and as understood by Christians of the pre-theological age includes a narrative of events. Although Paul is not primarily interested in history as such, we find him repeatedly referring to the life, humiliation, death, resurrection, of Jesus. Once he expressly states these historical facts as constituting a part of the gospel he preached. If possible even more strenuously does an early Christian writer like Ignatius insist upon the reality of the person and the experiences of the crucified and risen Jesus. And it is this concrete message as to Jesus together with its implications for the spiritual life that has constituted the substance of evangelicalism throughout all the ages. The Christ was something more than a "principle," something more than Truth. He was a genuine person sharing in the course of history but rising above the natural order that had apparently crushed him, and sharing his triumph with all those who share his spirit.

Similarly, the gospel of the New Testament embodies the experience of the first Christians. Primarily, such experience began with the acceptance of Jesus as teacher, healer, prophet, and the Christ of the coming kingdom. But their real enthusiasm and evangelistic impulse was connected with their belief in the resurrection of Jesus. They had seen

him, heard him, and, if the gospels in their present form are to be trusted, had put their hands upon him. As to the nature of this experience of the risen Jesus we shall presently inquire, but that it is an integral part of the first preaching of the gospel there can be, and is, no serious doubt.

But Christian experience as related in the New Testament included also the "gifts" and the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit. Whatever psychological character we may ascribe to such experience it is obvious that it formed a part of the original gospel message. The promise of the Holy Spirit was to all those who accepted the testimony of the new evangelists and believed on Jesus as the Messiah. The power of God was announced as present in human lives, not only as the assurance of an eschatological salvation, inestimably precious as that was, but also as the source of ability to work cures, make converts, and grow morally strong in the spiritual life. In the first defense of the new faith three arguments were uppermost: the actual resurrection of Jesus, the coming of the Spirit of God into the believer's life, and the fulfillment of messianic prophecy. It is obvious that the first two of these apologetic elements are in the region of history.

2. In the second place, the gospel is historical in

that the concept by which the experience and person of Jesus were interpreted and evaluated was itself the product of historical forces.

We know Jesus as a definite historical person only as he lives for us in the records of the faith of his earliest disciples. The gospel therefore is not simply a record of the experiences of Jesus; it is a message of the redemptive value of these experiences as formulated by those who had experienced the redemption. That is one reason why Jesus is so real. He has been worked into the very life of history. Now in the faith of these disciples Jesus had a meaning and an office. He was the Christ; that is, — and the definition is fundamental, — *the one whom God Himself empowered by His own resident spirit to save His people by establishing them as His kingdom.*

It was impossible for these conceptions, in which were expressed the power and significance of Jesus, to have been other than creatures of an historical situation. Experiences which become the substance of any preaching are always expressed in terms and thought-forms derived from the social mind in which those who formulate it shared. How could it be otherwise in the case of Jesus? We should not expect the Grecian world, of its own accord, to have thought of him as the Messiah. The Greeks did not

have any messianic concept to employ. That came from Judaism.

This Jewish social mind itself was the product of a long historical process and embraced distinct elements each of which came over from the past.

First of all the messianic hope which furnished the messianic interpretation itself was the outcome of a long development. Some of its elements are to be traced even to Babylon. It involved much more than the use of a single term. It was a world-view which extended from creation in the past to and into a new Age that was to come. Not that the New Testament writers explicitly distinguish between their interpretation and the facts they interpret. As has already been implied, to the early Christian the acquittal at the Day of Judgment was as real an element of the gospel as Jesus' teaching about the Fatherliness of God, or his resurrection, or his sinlessness. Apparently Paul was as much convinced of the present kingdom of Satan as he was of the coming kingdom of God. The gospel in fact involved a dualism that forced upon nascent orthodoxy its first philosophical problem, namely, how a good God could be incarnate in an evil world, and thus compelled it to combat gnosticism.

Then, too, deep in the evangelic message we can see

embodied theological conceptions born of that social experience which always finds expression in the religious thinking of an age. The Jewish social mind had two final thought-forms in religion, — monarchy and parenthood. The Jew of the first century could think of no higher analogy of divine power than the kingdom of that awful emperor who sat enthroned upon the Palatine. Religion, so far as it dealt with relations between man and God, was inevitably expressed in monarchical terms. If God were the king, men were his subjects, either rebellious and to be punished, or loyal and to be rewarded. The test and measure of their relations was the divine law. The gospel in the New Testament presupposes this theology. The human race had broken God's law. The Sovereign of the Universe had nothing before Him, therefore, but to punish, unless He chose in His grace to forgive. Thus there arose that extension of the monarchical conception of religion to be met in the thought of Paul. But Paul did not originate the idea of justification and an atonement in which the messianic king suffered for his subjects. Both analogies were drawn from the political practice and were already operative in the religious thought of his times.

Similarly in the case of the parental analogy.

The heavenly Father, in the teaching of Jesus and of Paul, has dignity as well as graciousness. In the ancient family the father had rights and the children had duties, and these reciprocal relations were not affected by the father's waiving of his rights. He could forgive only because he might punish. Severity and love were similarly involved in the family government of God.

Another institution which became an integral part of the original gospel message was that of sacrifice. The interpretation of the death of Christ as a sacrifice was thrust upon the early Christian by the religious practice of the entire world of New Testament times. Among Jews and Greeks alike no man came to a sense of reconciliation with his god without completing the reconciling process in the dramatic act of the sacrifice. The doctrine of the atonement, it is true, was not at the start formally drawn from the sacrificial analogy. As long as the institution actually continued, it was enough merely to speak of that death in terms of the altar. The rationalizing of the death of Christ in the first thousand years of Christian thought proceeded along the line of the monarchical conception. Jesus, so teachers like Origen asserted, gave himself as a ransom to Satan that he might thus release those of his subjects whom

Satan held in his power in Sheol. But none the less the death of Jesus was constantly described in terms of the altar, and his blood was held to be the archetype of the blood of bulls and goats.

The first preaching of the gospel message also presupposed the fundamental social ideals of the ancient world. Equality and fraternity were terms of little but academic interest. So long as the king was autocratic, his subjects differed widely in the privileges they enjoyed, and these privileges ran from that sorry minimum enjoyed by slaves to that maximum given to those nobles whom the emperor elected to be his particular friends. The gospel, it is true, breaks across these differences in classes by declaring that all social differences among subjects of the kingdom vanish, but such a state of equality was invariably transferred to the ideal relations of the future kingdom. In Christ, *i.e.*, in the ideal social order of the spiritual life he was to establish, there was neither bond nor free; in the church there were slaves. In Christ there was neither male nor female; in the church the woman was the weaker vessel.

IV

Were, then, these first Christians wholly otherworldly, and did their message of salvation ignore the

needs of the very real world in which the Christian waited the coming of his Lord?

The early Christians did not recognize any call to save the Roman Empire or its institutions. They were citizens of a kingdom yet to come. Pending its arrival, they endured the Empire's oppressions, obeyed as best they could its laws, and withdrew as far as was practicable from its evil associations. They married, bought and sold, died and were buried, according to the customs of their neighbors. They would keep themselves unspotted from the world, but they did not attempt to save the world. They sought to save men and women from the world.

Yet such statements though true are not the whole truth. For restrained as was the early Christian in the social expression of his new spiritual life because of his belief in the speedy return of Jesus to establish his transcendental kingdom, he was nevertheless socializing ideals that were to be of the utmost influence. Love and faith and sexual purity are positive forces in any society. Even more potent is the belief in God's working in the community of those who worship Him and endeavor to grow like Jesus in daily life. The kingdom of God as a social ideal among the early Christians was eschatological, but as among the Jews it was none the less social.

To question this would be utterly to misinterpret the gospel on the one hand and the social influences of Christianity on the other.

The makers of our great theologies — and all Christendom is one at this point — have built many of these apocalyptic eschatological hopes into the structure of historical orthodoxy. To hold all of them in strenuous literalness, however, has been characteristic of but few groups of Christians. From the days of the Montanist there has been a tendency to treat the eschatological elements of the gospel as figures of speech, to refer them wholly to the distant future, or to ignore them. Chiliasm, or, as we more commonly call it to-day, millennarianism, has always been rejected as a controlling element in authoritative dogma. But it has always been a disturbing factor in the history of the church; and naturally, for it is clearly enough an integral element of the first preaching of the gospel. Indeed, from one point it might almost be said that the history of dogma has been in no small degree the history of a struggle between that Christian teaching which made eschatology its controlling factor and that Christian theology which gave preëminence to contemporary philosophy. Every great theologian has been forced in some way to adjust the apocalyptic eschatological element of the

gospel to the perspective of the essential evangelic message which he brought to his age. The modern man of to-day, just as truly as the modern man of the third or the fifth or the sixteenth century, must needs face the problem for himself. But he must do this methodically, appreciatively, sympathetically, and not arrogantly or subjectively.

CHAPTER II

THE MODERN MAN

THE world we live in is obviously very different from that of the apostles, and the presuppositions of our thinking are vastly different from theirs. Indeed, it would be difficult to overestimate the contrasts between the age of the New Testament and our own as far as the fundamental attitudes of the social mind are concerned. In the outer forms of life there are, it is true, many points of similarity. It would be difficult to find a more modern period in history than the first Christian century. Barring their inability to apply steam and electricity to industry,—an exception of incalculable importance,—the men of the first century of the Roman Empire were much like the men of to-day. They had their great business corporations, their art, their literature, their professions, their universities, their "new women," their athletics. Indeed, we learn that at Carthage students were disorderly in lectures, that at Rome they failed to pay their fees, and that at Alexandria professional athletes were maintained through something closely

resembling that ingenious device of to-day, the training table. It is true the ancient world did not have football, but it had gladiatorial sports as a tolerable substitute.

I

But over against these similarities are at least four fundamental differences: —

1. The modern age is primarily scientific and controlled by the conception of process.

It is difficult for us to appreciate what scientific thought must have been in a world that believed its universe consisted of a flat earth around which the waters flowed, with several heavens superimposed, and with a great pit beneath in which was the abode of the dead. There was considerable knowledge in ancient culture of the movements of the heavenly bodies, but all religious thought was affected by this primitive conception of the universe. It was not difficult, for instance, for the early church to believe that all men by looking upward at the same moment could see the Son of man coming in the clouds. To-day we do not know just when we are looking up and when we are looking down, and such a united vision of an appearance in the heavens is physically unthinkable, except on the part of those theologians who give us to understand that at the second coming of

Christ, God will probably enable men to have a new method of sight.

A striking illustration of its fundamentally different attitude toward nature is to be seen in medical practice. In surgery, it is true, the ancient world had acquired great facility, as is evidenced not only by reports of very difficult operations, but also by the collection of surgical instruments from Pompeii preserved in the museum at Naples. But in dealing with disease equal progress had not been made. It has always been easier for men to mend a broken bone than to cure a cold. This difficulty was met by the Jews in a very simple fashion. They laid disease upon Satan. He sent miseries upon the world, and minor devils into people. If a man was crazy, he was possessed of a devil. If he had boils, he had devils. If a woman was bent over by some disease, she had been bound by Satan. Indeed, devils might be said to have been the bacilli of the ancient world. The way to cure a man was to find some way to induce the devils to leave him. Sometimes this was done by conjuring the devil into a certain plant, and then attaching the plant to the tail of a dog, and then forcibly inducing the dog to pull it up. Sometimes it was done by giving a dose so nasty that the devil could not abide in the same

body with it. Sometimes it was done by using magic names. Such methods did not exhaust the medical practice of the ancient world, but they were so widespread as to enable us to appreciate easily the great difference between the age of the New Testament and our own as regards scientific attainments.

It is hardly necessary to call attention to those great differences of view of the universe and life which have been wrought by physical and biological investigations. True, the older philosophers, sometimes in almost startling fashion, anticipated the general philosophy we have built upon scientific discoveries, but no one would deny that a new intellectual age began with the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" and the resulting supremacy of the theory of evolution. Thereafter men increasingly have thought in terms of process.

The conception of the orderly, genetic succession of purposeful changes played no rôle in the stratum of society to which Judaism and the gospel appealed. The eclipse was more significant than the sunrise. In our modern world the wonder born of awe of the unexplored universe has all but disappeared. Our capacity for surprise has been ruined by the spectroscope, radium, the X-ray, and the experiments of Professor Loeb. There is no man so bold as to

prophesy how deep our science with its theory of evolution may probe into the mysteries of existence. Even the ether itself is threatened. One after another the great secrets of the universe are being disclosed, at least in the sense that we can tell the conditions under which certain phenomena invariably appear. Our ignorance of the remainder no longer is lightened by the appeal to devils or angels. We are classifying phenomena so rapidly as to be convinced that such classification means knowledge, and that the universe is everywhere sane and law-abiding. Health and disease have become matters of investigation, and in so far as they involve the problem of evil, they have become phases of the all-absorbing search for the final unity of the evolving cosmos.

At the first glance this process appears full of contradictions. It is not steady or unbroken. It has its eddies and its counter currents. Progress is sometimes more than offset by degeneracy. But degeneracy in turn is offset by regeneration and the great movement begins again although not always in the same quarter in which it has suffered a check. This fact illustrates the apparent atomistic, divisive character of change. The world of nature as well as of history seems full of unrelated and, to any science we as yet possess, unrelatable movements and

counter-movements. There is no such patent evolution as some enthusiasts assume.

Yet in the face of these perplexities, the creative thinkers of all time have held tenaciously to a world of purpose and order, of unity and meaning, above if not within the congeries of changes. History is more than events in time. Only in the perception of ordered change can thought rise above mere observation. And this unity compels the acceptance of itself despite all the protests of those who would deny it and allow existence to ravel out into innumerable unrelated existences. History itself, whether it be of the realm of impersonal forces or of the realm of human life, compels belief in this spiritual order that gives coherency to all our experiences. But this compulsion is due to the acceptance of the unity of process rather than that of states.

Humanity belongs to both these orders. On the one side it is a mass of impersonal atoms and forces subject to chemical and physical changes. On the other it is possessed of identities with this spiritual life that it has discovered as the source of unity and timelessness. Its history, whether one looks at the individual or the race, is a progress from the preponderance of the one to the dominance of the other. As living organisms men recapitulate the

history of other living organisms; as spiritual beings they differ from all other life. Just when the change from animal to animal-spiritual life occurred science cannot tell us with assurance. Whether life itself by God's will blossomed into a spiritual person, or whether the spiritual nature came by some divine creative fiat, is of no vital significance. Religion looks not to origins, but to destinies. It asks not Whence but Whither. But its answer to this question of questions must be in strictest conformity to what we know of human life and its history. For only thus can it come into that conformity with reality which the modern man demands. It, too, like science must recognize process.

But religion looks forward to the outcome of that process and endeavors to direct mankind thither. Therein lies its task and its legitimacy. For the spiritual life is no abstraction. It is as concrete as humanity. To realize its powers, to define its dependence upon and superiority to merely physical life, to inspire and make possible its growth by bringing it into dynamic relations with the equally real and concrete Spiritual Life of the universe, this is the supreme function of religion.

It is only the corollary of this conception of process that every approach our modern world makes to its

problems should be through history. Nothing is known apart from its relations. The present is only one phase of a continuous process. Nothing in the finite world merely is; it has become and may also be becoming. Knowledge of any sort must therefore involve an account of the forces from which a fact under discussion arose or at least by which it was conditioned.

This historical method is of first importance throughout the entire field of investigation, but in the region of religion it is all but revolutionary. We cannot as yet see just what its full effect is to be, but already it is a *sine qua non* of an understanding of the doctrines, rites, and institutions of all faiths. Under its influence the sacred literatures are studied in genealogical relations, and are traced to their beginnings far back of written histories, and the spiritual order that transcends the natural is seen to be not static but ever more self-revealing.

Sometimes, it is true, the application of the historical method may overreach itself and its results collapse because of their own weight. It too often mistakes resemblances for genetic relations and denies, at least implicitly, the creative power of the free spiritual life. Such I believe is true of some of the extreme views of the origin and nature of Christianity.

It is impossible, for instance, for me to see the reasonableness of finding in almost every thought and figure of the gospel adumbrations of Babylonian myths of Gilgamesh. But even in this case it would be unallowable to let dogmatic considerations affect either the conclusions or the method born of the application of the historical point of view. Even if the effect of such study is to dispell some of the mystery that has hitherto overhung sacred things, even though in some instances it may have reduced sanctity itself to mere antiquity and have set forth too nakedly opposing ideas time has allowed to appear united, the historical method in religion has its positive as truly as its speculative or negative results. But whether friendly or hostile to current beliefs, it is a potent factor in the modern mind. For it is a correlate of process.

2. A second and closely akin characteristic of the modern world is its conception of God as immanent in this process rather than an extra-mundane monarch. Sometimes it is true this belief extends over into a general monistic conception. Monism, however, is a metaphysical concept, and whatever may be its influence in a theological ontology, in religion a man must be enough of a practical dualist to see that in the act of faith God is objective to the human spirit.

The believer in God does not believe merely in himself or in an impersonal process. Monism in itself can never be a basis for a theology. For in experience we are dualists. But monistic or not, the world of thought in which we live cannot conceive of God as spatially absent from His universe any more than it can conceive of a living man's consciousness as spatially absent from his body. If, as is emphatically the case, we are involved in difficulties whenever we try to think of God in terms of time and space, we are in vastly greater difficulties when we think of Him as apart from those energies which constitute that situation of which we are a part.

Religious thinking is here at such agreement that it may fairly be said to have reached a stage in its evolution from which it will never revert. The primitive man thought of his gods in terms of primitive civilization and knowledge. They lived, so men thought, in mountains, and trees, and fountains. As civilization advanced men thought of God as a king dwelling in a celestial world from which He occasionally appeared to interrupt the ordinary course of nature, or sent His Spirit to chosen individuals. He was not merely transcendent, he was external. Our modern world thinks of Him as in His world, expressing Himself personally, although some-

times in forms which superficially viewed seem impersonal. And if, paradoxically, just because He is immanent men sometimes find themselves wondering whether He is needed, and too often are tempted to force Him into inactivity under a regency of Law, the man of religious experience can never regard God as a recluse. He finds the unity presupposed by impersonal sciences in a spiritual order which speaks through himself. God must be either the personalized Whole or, as I am forced rather to believe, the Person who, as over against our own personalities, expresses Himself in the Whole. No religion can ever suffice that makes Him anything less than ourselves. And we are persons.

The political and juristic conceptions of God persist in our own day, but they are no longer formative in constructive religious thinking. Therein is disclosed an attitude of mind that distinguishes the modern man of our day from him of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with all his "illumination." The doctrine of natural rights, whether in politics or theology, notwithstanding its efforts to get behind the state, did not dislodge juristic conceptions from theology. On the contrary, just as in the field of politics it set forth the natural rights of a proletariat as over against the legal rights of king and noble, did it in

the field of religion set forth the rights of a proletarian humanity as over against an autocratic church and the God of decrees. But once formulated these rights became, as it were, legally controlling. For this reason, as well as for others, the eighteenth century, with all its revolutions and deism, was more akin to the first century, even to the legalized Christianity of Tertullian and Augustine, than is ours. A study of its theologies and even of its religious negations will furnish some of the best criteria by which to judge how far removed is thought since the middle of the nineteenth century from the unpsychological, unhistorical juristic religious concepts of all preceding centuries. Nothing can better teach one the difficulties which any positive theology must at present face.

Intimately associated with this conception of God's personal relation with His world is the question of miracle. The modern man cannot conceive of any break in the causal, genetic process. True, he is ready to admit that there may be events which are not yet located in any of its known formulas, but in such a conception there is no place for that which, before its recent apologetic manipulation, the word miracle stood, — an event out of a causal series.

If this were all that can be said, our discussion

might as well stop here. For the gospel cannot remain the gospel in its New Testament sense and suffer the loss of all those events it calls "signs" and "wonders." That would conceivably mean even the loss of the historical Jesus himself. Yet on the other hand, the modern mind cannot abandon the very presupposition of its thinking at the behest of the man to whom the gospel is inseparable from the world-view of the first Christians.

If, however, we once drop the debatable word "miracle" and use the word "event" many difficulties vanish. No theist should object to such a change, for it not only clarifies the question every defender of Christian doctrine has attempted to answer, but it also clears the discussion of a mass of prejudice and metaphysical theology that has gathered about "miracle." If God be in His world, all events are of His will. They differ in being more or less classifiable. Prove that an event occurred and we find God there. He is as truly in the usual as in the unique. The modern man does not need the latter to justify his discovery of God in the former. What he does need to have shown him is that there is room within the universe of forces he knows for the expression of divine personality in unique events; that the Spiritual Life to which he is at times so indifferent is

free from the law of physical causality. True, the burden of proof grows the heavier in proportion as an event is unusual. But no alleged event can be regarded as impossible until it has been shown to be in actual contradiction, not to the general run of experience merely, but to the great generalizations which have been indubitably derived from nature and to the supreme conception of life as we find it expressed even in our own imperfectly free personalities. Break down the *a priori* objection born of an alleged immobility of experience and the supremacy of impersonal naturalism, and the question becomes one of testimony pure and simple. And that, too, without the loss of significance to the religious life. Even though we no longer hear His voice in the thunder, God is present in His cosmos — the Universal Life and Will and Love. And as spiritual beings men may speak to Him who is Spirit.

3. If possible an even more remarkable characteristic of our day is the growing sense of social solidarity.

At first glance this might seem to be very similar to the conception of unity present in the Roman Empire. The Roman citizen was the Roman citizen everywhere, and all about the Mediterranean there was a developing sense of imperial unity.

Bound together by roads and the almost equally well-defined routes of the Mediterranean, the great Empire could everywhere express itself administratively. During the first century of the Empire this unity was of necessity largely based upon military force, but behind militarism there was something far more vital. The provinces, although not possessed of the rights of full citizenship, were none the less beginning to evolve what under more favorable circumstances might have become the rudiments of a representative government. The cities also were passing through an evolution of municipal equality which, though at the start unobservable, was to develop in the third and fourth centuries into something at once burdensome and inspiring.

Such tendencies undoubtedly are no inconsiderable bond of union between the twentieth and the first century, but they seem almost trivial in comparison with the tremendous social movement in the midst of which we find ourselves. The era of revolution of the eighteenth century gave rise to a political equality so radical as all but to destroy the superficial analogies between itself and the political equality of the Empire under even Caracalla, Constantine, and Justinian. The Roman Empire, despite the provincial assembly, was ignorant of the con-

ception of representative democracy which has expressed itself in the constitutional monarchies and republics of Europe and America. It is true that in our political practice we are not quite sure whether women ought to be included under the general term Man, and the matter of taxes plays a considerable rôle in the franchise in even such a modern nation as Prussia. But we have no such distinction as those between a Roman citizen and a provincial, between the *honestiores* and the *humiliores*. We have abolished slavery, which was one of the recognized institutions of human society of the olden time, and women are rapidly achieving industrial as well as political equality with men. Even the superficial observer of society knows that the philosophy of natural rights which brought about the revolutions and republics of the eighteenth century and the constitutional reforms of the nineteenth has long since passed from the political into the economic and social stage. The age in which we live is profoundly interested in non-political rights.

It is impossible to overestimate the extent and influence of this new social feeling. Born as it is in large measure of the unconscious influence of Christian idealism, it has spread far beyond the confines of the church, and indeed, unfortunately, often makes

the church itself appear unfraternal or the possession of an economic class. The rise of socialism is only one phase of a universal social consciousness which none of us can escape. We see ourselves no longer parts of a mere political unity, comparable with citizenship in the ancient cities. We think in terms of "situations," rather than of isolated individuals, or even of individuals and environment. The extension of the concepts of natural law into history has given us a sense of solidarity which sometimes even threatens our estimates of the worth of the individual himself. We have begun to realize that individualism must be social and that the word fraternity stands for something more than political liberty and equality.

4. And, finally, another characteristic of our modern world is its refusal to accept as the basis of truth authority or metaphysical deduction.

In this we are the descendants of that century of philosophy which began with Kant. The time has passed when any majority can command universal obedience by saying, "It seems good to us and the Holy Ghost." We know too well how creeds were developed and formulated to have any great confidence in their finality as the expressions of spiritual realities, or to expect them to be understood without a knowl-

edge of the philosophy, politics, and persecution from which they so largely sprang. True, the scientific spirit, despite its critical habit, has too often within it something of the old authoritative temper, and liberality is frequently more bigoted than the views which it attacks; but none the less a pronunciamento must now be shown to be true, not simply "approved."

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of this habit of mind of our modern world. It has long since ceased to be merely academic. It shapes itself everywhere. You will find it in the anarchist and the so-called Bohemian as truly as in the man of the laboratory; in India and Japan as well as in Europe and America. Even the Roman Catholic turns Modernist, and the educated Mahommedan, rationalist. Such an emancipation brings its blessing, but no less truly does it bring its miseries. Who has not seen some soul in spiritual agony as the foundations built of authority totter, yet hesitating to trust to foundations built of rationalized experience! But whether helpful or injurious, the spirit of criticism and liberty is here, and we cannot, even if we would, escape its control. The vote of the church can no longer make us believe that the sun moves around the world, and the vote of a scientific association

cannot make us believe that anything is true which denies the evidence of systematized experiment. The doctrine of a uniformly authoritative Bible is being replaced by the inspiring sense of the spiritual worth of the Bible as discovered through historico-literary criticism and the experience of the Christian community. The modern man yields only to that he finds to be real.

Here, too, we hear struck still another new note. The modern world believes that to be real which has been found by methodical procedure and which can be so correlated with the sane conclusions of normal experience and widespread induction as to make life richer in knowledge and the power of progressive self-expression. Agnosticism, though moribund as a philosophy, is but one phase of that exaggerated caution which our scientific spirit begets. Since the days of Kant we are slow to be too positive about matters which lie beyond the range of the "practical reason," *i.e.* of experiment and methodical test. Empiricism has reached over into philosophy and given us pragmatism. Metaphysics, like ecclesiastical authority, has been supplemented if not replaced by that type of philosophy which finds its ultimates in values rather than in alleged axioms or intuitions.

These four basal elements of the world-view mark off the modern world from the world of the New Testament. But they do much more. They make it difficult if not impossible for our age to use the presuppositions that were embodied in and gave color to the thought of its predecessor. The difficulty clearly is not born of theology but of widening social experience and knowledge. Just as the men of the New Testament times could not free themselves from their heritage of social mind, and the men of the twelfth century could not break with the fascinating dream of imperial unity, do the men of to-day find themselves subject to the social mind from which their thoughts sprang and of which they are a part.

II

Who then is the "modern man"?

1. Certainly not the man who is merely living now. Humanity, as you ordinarily meet it, is an interesting combination of survivals, many of them the ruling characteristics of periods long since passed. If a man will take the trouble really to get acquainted with people who are in his own social circle, he will find that there are representatives of every conceivable form of thinking, from that of the most advanced specialist in the very van of discovery to that of primi-

tive man. For it will not do to look for primitive men and women among the uncultured classes exclusively. You will find them the next time you go out to an afternoon tea. There is many a primitive man who keeps a valet, or rather whose valet keeps him. In point of view of the conventions he is infallibly well informed, but his passions, his ideas, his judgments of humanity, his estimate of the dominant motives of life, his standards of right and wrong, are those of man in the savage state. To many men and women civilization means simply pressed trousers and Paris fashions. Their outer selves are as charming as possible; their inner selves are reincarnations of Ab, the cave man. There are plenty of people whose ideas are those of Genghis Khan. True, they do not count heads as a measure of their success; but if they are men they count dollars, and if they are women they count hearts. That is to say, their primary interests are those of the marauder.

There are other people going about their daily tasks with circumspection and with careful regard for the conventions, yet deep within themselves they cherish a view of the universe and of God, which to all intents and purposes is fetishism. They do not dare to say their children are well without knocking three times on wood, and upon no consideration would they

walk under a ladder or sit among thirteen at table. So far as they live under the control of such presuppositions they are reincarnating in our complex civilization the superstitions of primitive society.

In fact it is hard for any of us to escape thinking and living as survivals of early ages. We still point up to heaven, and we still throw rice after newly married couples.

2. Nor is he alone the modern man who is in revolt against the past. It is true that men of this type in appropriating the name are not altogether without warrant. Liberty to select his name may fairly be accorded any man at his philosophical christening. But such an appropriation of a term is somewhat ungenerous, in that it implies that only the iconoclast can claim to possess the modern spirit. Even if, as von Hartmann expects, the future may develop an attitude of mind that is genuinely pessimistic, we have not yet universally come to feel that the universe is the product of a supreme will that needs the help of humanity to get itself reunited to a supreme reason. It is more reasonable to regard the modern man as the "free spirit" of Nietzsche, who would erect an entirely new ethics on the ruins of our modern society, and who claims already to have grasped a meaning of the universe which is "beyond

good and evil." But here again the use of the term is too considerably narrowed, and is made to include only those qualities which can appeal to a particular class of men out of sympathy with too many of the really constructive forces of to-day, and in particular too devoted to a materialism that denies to the superhuman spiritual life a freedom it predicates of the human. We must seek a definition of wider extension.

3. A formal definition of modernness is not difficult. He is the modern man of any period who is controlled by the forces which are making To-morrow. In a period like that of the Maccabees he was the modern man who embodied the ideals which made the little city state of Jerusalem into the kingdom of John Hyrcanus. In the days of Julius Cæsar he sympathized with the growing unity which culminated in the imperialism of the Antonines and the legislation of Justinian; in the twelfth century he championed the rise of the free cities; in the sixteenth century he was swayed by the forces born of the new learning, the new individualism, and the new world; in the eighteenth century he enforced the political consequences of the doctrine of natural rights and had a share in freeing thought from ecclesiastical control and the state from an outgrown feudalism and an absolute monarchy.

The modern man of to-day is he who is controlled by those ideals which are transforming his inherited world into the newer order which his children will inherit. He is the child as well as the maker of To-morrow. That is to say, he is the man who is controlled by the four outstanding transforming characteristics of the age which have already been described. Such control may be conscious or unconscious, but he can no more help thinking of God as finding eternal self-expression within the universe than the Hebrew could think of Jehovah directing the affairs of the world from heaven. He thinks as instinctively in terms of process as the ancient world thought in terms of static being. He may be neither a socialist nor a social reformer, but he feels the growing sense of brotherhood and cannot think of social relations in terms of insulated individualism. He may not be technically a scientist, but he knows that truth cannot be based on authority other than that of reality itself.

III

Two objections among others may be raised to this definition.

1. In the first place it may be said that it gives too little prominence to theological reconstruction.

Social sympathies have not always characterized theologians, and it is clear that if they are to be recognized as conditioning the acceptance of the gospel, new and troublesome questions will arise. For we must face the actual practicability of a Christian ethic. Theology has seldom judged it necessary to raise such an issue. It has been content to deal with individual spiritual experience, the rewards and punishments of the future, and the clothing of some philosophy with scriptural expressions.

The answer to such an objection is very simple: It is beside the mark. "Modern man" is not coextensive with "theologian." Important as is his function in the religious world the theologian is far enough from being the controlling factor in today's religious thought, and the gospel is face to face with questions other than those he raises. The really vital religious issues are those set by the social order itself, and these cannot be answered by the use of exclusively theological methods and presuppositions, but by the test of life itself. Theology must be brought to see that our day's interest in metaphysical definition is not so intense as its interest in social reconstruction. Our modern world has as little patience with Aristotelian syllogisms as with the literature of Euphuism. But it has a profound and

ever growing interest in human needs. If theology would not die of intellectual dry-rot, it must become biological and social.

2. The second possible objection is the precise opposite of the first. It may be urged that such a conception of the modern man gives too much prominence to theology. A belief in an immanent God, it may be objected, so narrows the field as to limit discussion of the acceptability of the gospel to those already predisposed to religion. And thus the atheist and the agnostic are excluded.

Such a limitation, however, is unavoidable. True, some "modern men" are thoroughgoing champions of naturalism and to them any call to recognize the inner world of spirit, in which and because of which the inconsistencies, the minutiæ, and the otherwise meaningless infinitude of changes find order and meaning, would be idle. But such men can find their philosophy satisfying only as they neglect or distort the supernaturalistic facts of the spiritual life, the timeless values that gleam forth from all events in time. Those who believe in God and the world of spiritual freedom, be that belief never so unlike that of conventional theology, are the only persons to whom the gospel can make its appeal. And this class forms the overwhelming majority of those who share in the new social

mind. Atheists and confirmed agnostics there may be, but they are few enough, and I am persuaded that many even of them would prefer to accept the gospel if they judged it amenable to the ordinary laws of thought. Judging this impossible they prefer the religion of philosophy to the religion of the New Testament. The prevailing attitude of the modern man toward Christianity is one of intellectual confusion, but of moral sympathy. Moral discontent, apprehensive curiosity as to the outcome of death, and that sense of dependence and helplessness which every man sooner or later feels in the presence of the universe, can always be counted upon as motives to lead thoughtful men to give respectful attention to any serious presentation of the real message of Jesus.

The church has a real mission to men and women who are utterly out of sympathy with religion, but it owes quite as important and even more pressing service to that rapidly growing class who consciously or unconsciously find their faith imperiled by the religious implications of the modern mind. Sometimes such persons most irritatingly boast of modernism. Sometimes, equally unfortunately for their own peace of mind, they lament their inability to think in terms of those older presuppositions which make the gospel so easily acceptable. Sometimes they grow impatient

and arrogant, but at heart every such man knows himself to be morally imperfect and longs for the peace that comes from the harmony of religious conceptions with those of the philosophy and science he has come to see are not to be denied. And it is this fourfold attitude of mind with which the gospel must be shown and can be shown to be consonant. If we are to bring the gospel to the modern man, we must set forth the permanent values of the Christianity of the New Testament, and above all of the historical Jesus himself, in the light of evolution, divine immanence, social solidarity, and a sense of reality born of scientific method and a perception of worth.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL

THE old gospel faces a new age. Therein lies its problem. But is it worth answering? Why go back thus to the New Testament and seek to recover and reënforce the primitive eschatological gospel? Why not rather seek to discover truth by an exploration of religious experience as we know it to-day, using the New Testament as one of its many sources? Or, on the other hand, why should we not accept some approved theology and find peace in submission to ecclesiastical authority?

Such questions are legitimate. The gospel is not identical with Christianity, if that term be used to represent the present religion that originated in the gospel but has taken up elements from civilization. But, whether we like it or not, a truly evangelical Christianity is not only the religion most susceptible of philosophical justification, but it is a religion that will rise and fall with the New Testament. Even a better religion than that of Jesus and Paul would

not be theirs. For my part I am perfectly ready to substitute something better for the gospel as soon as it appears, but I am as yet unable to imagine anything more final than the religion of Jesus as found in the New Testament. Christianity as we know it still fails to represent that religion. Jesus still leads the spiritual life. The religion of the future must be evangelical or it will be socially powerless. At all events that seems to be the testimony of two thousand years of experiment. During those two millenia every conceivable substitute for the gospel has been tried. Docetism, gnosticism, Ophitism, and Manicheeism in the ancient church; chiliasm, fanaticism, rationalism, and anathematizing sects of every sort in the later church, all have failed. Only those religious bodies who have preserved the continuity of that doctrinal development which embodies religion as it is set forth in the gospel of the New Testament are to-day of commanding significance. I cannot believe that it will be otherwise in the future. The Christians of to-morrow will differ from us in many particulars, but they will be at one with the spiritual life as it is portrayed in the gospel, or else they will shrivel into esoteric groups united for the coöperative support of private chaplains.

The modern man has vested interests in Christ and

the gospel he would be foolish to surrender simply because he finds it difficult to realize upon them. For this if for no other reason he must be brought to take the gospel seriously. It must be no mere theological debate into which he is introduced. If the gospel is not to be relegated by the educated class to the antiquarians as a naïve superstition, we must frankly face the situation set by the new social mind and discover a method by which men, without isolating the world of religion from the world of science, may hold to the teachings of the gospel as elements of a religious world-view that will bring not only intellectual peace but spiritual uplift. Skepticism is not the sign-manual of spiritual enlightenment. We believe as truly as we interrogate. Let us, then, count our assets as honestly as we count our liabilities. However numerous our theologies, there is only one gospel.

Such a task must be undertaken irenically, constructively and patiently, in full sympathy and utmost coöperation with men of unscientific and unphilosophical mind. If there is to be a reunited church every Barnabas and Paul must give the right hand of fellowship to every James and Peter. Your born radical cannot understand why the average man is so slow to break connection with the past in

any phase of life and particularly in the region of religion. He needs to be taught sympathy with those who are wisely conservative and yet whose loyalty to the things of the spirit is as intense as his own. On the other hand, those who would estop real thinking on religion by the assertion that "what was good enough for my saintly mother is good enough for me" also need to see that the life of the spirit is not identical with its temporal expression. The difficulty with such an attitude of mind lies not in the regard which the man has for what was sacred to his mother, but rather in the fact that he cannot think as did his mother. More than that, his own son, lacking any such ties of sentiment, is in imminent danger of falling into religious indifference. If the children of religious reformers are very likely to be spiritual dilettanti, the children of religious reactionaries are likely to be Epicureans.

I

Two current methods of determining the relation of the gospel to our age are easily recognized; the literalistic and the negative.

1. There are plenty of people who are attempting a divorce of their religious life from their best intellectual efforts. But such divorce can result only in

misery. When religion becomes simply a matter of sentiment, unregulated and unapproved by a man's best thinking, it begins to lose its power to inspire Christlike morality.

A merely superficial examination of the religious world shows the truth of this generalization. On the one side there is an increasing reverence for reality, or, if reality is beyond our reach, a frank avowal of ignorance. On the other side there is a strong pressure being brought to bear upon the religious man, which, whatever its terminology, amounts to this: Stop thinking over fundamentals! Accept certain doctrines as final because the church has held them in the past and it is impossible either to disprove or to prove them. Rest content in enthusiasm for religion as distinct from theology. Accept the authority of the church and cease the attempt to find reasons where submission to ecclesiastical decisions alone can bring peace. Was it not Augustine, the father of both Roman and Protestant orthodoxy, who said, "I would not believe even the gospel except the authority of the Catholic church moved me thereto"?

It is natural that such an attitude of mind should express itself as hostile to any type of theology except that formed by a literalistic use of the New Testa-

ment. Unwilling to abandon formulas hallowed by the reverence of the past, its champions insist that, regardless of modern views, certain things are to be received on authority and are not to be subjected to the ordinary processes of scientific testing and systematization. The New Testament is to be carried over bodily into our religious thinking. Under the guise of a loyalty to the "old gospel" there is thus propagated an enthusiasm which too frequently leaves its possessor hostile to a spontaneous expression of his spiritual life in the concepts of his own day, clinging to beliefs which can be held only at the cost of that view of the world which is dominating the thinking of to-day and will even more dominate the thinking of to-morrow.

Whenever such a citizen of the world of churches becomes a citizen of the world of laboratories he encounters great difficulties. Too frequently he is swept over into complete distrust of his older faith. Chemistry and physics, biology and history, conspire to aid the triumph of naturalism. Without properly stopping to consider the foolishness of such an act, many a man who has been forced from a literalistic use of the gospel has turned away from the Bible in much the same way as that in which he turns from the sacred writings of other people. The difficulties

which beset his olden-time religious enthusiasm have been magnified, and he relegates Christian faith to children and the masses and turns to Matter and the great Unknown.

The subjection of the spiritual life to a literalistic use of the eschatological gospel, however, does not always result in such unfortunate agnosticism. It also persists in the case of men who either deliberately or instinctively have refused to come under the influence of our modern world-view. The only serious concession which they would make to the world of science is as to the time of the second coming of Jesus. This event Christians of this theological type are ready to hold was seen by the apostles in a "prophetic perspective" and therefore out of precise chronological relations. Conceptions of this sort obviously imply an abandonment of the modern world as constituted by science, though they do not always involve the complete subjection of the life of the spirit to the bondage of the letter. Yet there are thousands of men and women of noblest Christian character, of splendid moral enthusiasm and religious earnestness, who believe in a hell of literal fire, in a personal devil, in demoniacal possession, in the absolute inerrancy of all the Biblical writings, in the creation of the world in six days, in the physical

coming of Christ in the sky, and in the materialistic resurrection of the body through a miraculous recombination of its original or other particles. Such persons may be modern to their finger tips when it comes to business, but religiously and philosophically they are to all intents and purposes citizens of the first century of our era. Theologically speaking, they are contemporary but not modern.

No serious thinker can fail to respect such loyalty to a literalistic gospel or to seek to emulate the earnest religion it engenders. You will find it in the hearts of consecrated evangelists, lay workers, Salvation Army lasses and American Volunteers. But what can be done in the case of a man who cannot share in such indifference to the modern world? Shall he be forbidden the kingdom of God except as he first rejects his science and his belief of the God of Law? Must he who passionately, even heroically, holds to the absoluteness of the supranatural, timeless, spiritual life, be forced to clothe his faith in symbols he believes to be but relative and unsatisfying?

2. At the other extreme from these who thus separate religion from thinking in the interests of a literalistic interpretation of the gospel are those who hold aloof from the gospel on the ground that it is

utterly inconsistent with current science and philosophy. They emphasize the difference in the character of the data given and demanded by science and theology respectively and discredit religious certitude. There is, it is true, among such persons a growing disposition to recognize religion as inherently human. But interest in the psychology and history of religion is too often seen to culminate in a pseudo-philosophy that holds that religious experience is but a phase of sex- and social-development. To persons of this type, the gospel, in any approach to the sense that we have seen it held in the ancient church, is a matter of merely antiquarian interest. At the best they regard it as a sort of "suggestion" that may help the unsophisticated to regain his health.

II

We are sometimes given to understand that there is no third alternative; that either we must reject the gospel of the historical Jesus in the interest of science, or reject science in the interest of the historical gospel. To the student of history, however, such an antithesis is not exclusive. He knows that there is a third alternative, that of true conservatism; viz. such an historical evaluation of the gospel as it stands in the New Testament as will disclose both its histor-

ical and its timeless realities and will make possible a formulation of its content in modern terms and in accordance with constructive principles which are the equivalents of the controlling expositions of Jesus and his message to be found in the New Testament.

1. Such a method involves: —

(*a*) The discovery by the methods of historico-literary criticism of the oldest records of the life of Jesus and of the primitive Christian faith.

(*b*) The comparison of the world-view of New Testament times with the contents of such records and the classification of the elements of the world-view found in the gospel.

(*c*) The distinction between such world-view and the positive data of the spiritual life of the gospel it correlates or interprets.

(*d*) The discovery by comparison and other tests of the elements of such world-view as are actually constructive principles of the gospel in the formulation of the content of the spiritual life in a particular historical situation.

(*e*) The combination of the positive data of the gospel in accordance with concepts which are the equivalents of such of these primitive constructive and interpretative concepts which have been found to possess more than temporary and pictorial value.

It is not possible at this time to discuss the critical process. Such brief treatment as we can give it must be postponed to our discussion of the historicity of Jesus. Just now let us assume that trustworthy records springing from the followers of Jesus can be found by criticism — an assumption all but unquestioned — and turn to the problems of discovering what is the real content of the gospel both as regards data and systematizing and evaluating concepts.

2. Starting with the original sources resulting from the critical process we shall find our problem to no small degree simplified. While the New Testament as it stands is now almost universally admitted to contain within itself material which has been superimposed upon the original teaching of Jesus, this added material is not different in kind from the material in the oldest sources. Criticism at this point removes from the gospel distracting details rather than a general world-view such as that which has already been described as conditioning the men of the New Testament period. Further, if it is comparatively easy to discover the general presuppositions that sprang from the social mind of the first century, it is quite as easy to recognize the particular controlling concept by which the first disciples made intelligible and real to themselves the significance of Jesus.

As has already been said, this controlling concept is messianism. To this we must find clear equivalents in our modern presuppositions if our theology is really to be evangelical.

The comparative study of religion enables us to see that the messianic concept as it appears in the New Testament is derived from the Judaism of Jesus' day. For if we come up to the gospel through the history of Jewish eschatology as seen in the apocalypses written in the three centuries following the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to crush the Jewish religion, we are struck by the almost complete parallelism between the two hopes.[1] The two ages, the present under the control of Satan, who must be conquered, a heavenly Jerusalem which is to be established upon the earth in the glorious age which is to come, a Christ, a summoning of the dead from Sheol in order to be judged, a Judgment Day, a lake of fire, a resurrection of the righteous, all are in the literature of Judaism, which, as has already been said, is in turn a development of literary and religious tendencies traceable to older Eastern religions. It is impossible to see in them the characteristic and peculiar contribution of Christianity to religion.

[1] The reader who cares to pursue this subject may be referred to my "Messianic Hope in the New Testament."

But thanks to such comparison we can distinguish the characteristic facts of the gospel from the inherited interpretative element.

3. As a result of the process involved in making this first distinction between the content and the interpretative concepts we have the following formulation of the positive elements which are involved in the general conception of the gospel heralded by Jesus and elaborated by Paul as a message of an assured way of salvation from evil, sin, and death.

(*a*) The God of Law is the God of Love; that is to say, the universe both physical and spiritual, in which we live, is an expression of a spiritual life that is knowable, purposeful, and loving.

(*b*) This God of Love is redemptively revealed in and by Jesus, his death being the exposition of the unity of divine love and law.

(*c*) Man can be forgiven; that is, can reach more perfectly moral personal development and can triumph over the effects of sin by a repentance that leads to a voluntary personal union with God, and the consequent all-sufficient reinforcement of his spiritual life by God.

(*d*) The act of faith which makes possible such a union is evoked by the historical Jesus. To have faith in him is to have faith in God.

(*e*) There is a certain and blessed individual im-

mortality superior to the earthly life for those who are possessed of a spiritual life like God's as revealed in Jesus; the guaranty of which is the historic fact of the resurrection of Jesus.

(*f*) There is possible and certain a new social order in which men's relations to each other shall be those of brothers because they shall have become sons of God, and are thus empowered to further the triumph of the spiritual life in the midst of the temporal order.

Or, more systematically, the gospel is a message of the redemptive love of the God of Law; of God's presence in Jesus; of a spiritual and therefore more individual life beyond death made possible by the transformation of the repentant human personality by dynamic personal union with the God of Love mediated by faith in Jesus; and of a regenerate society that shall bring blessing to the individual because of the socialization of the regenerate spiritual life of individuals, — all revealed as realizable and morally just by the supreme teaching, the spiritual experiences, the sinless life, the death and the resurrection of the historical Jesus, and further guaranteed by the spiritual experience of his followers who accept the message as true and make it controlling in their own lives.

The two foci of this good news, the historical Jesus

and the experience of the Spirit by Christians, cannot be shown to be derived from any precedent expectation among the Jews of the New Testament times. In fact, they contradict messianic expectations as they are known to us in contemporary literature. They cannot be accounted for by any sane religio-historical method, and must be regarded as two primary and original contributions of Christianity to religious history.

4. And further, it is evident to any student of the New Testament that the center of this message is in life rather than in teaching. But not in physical life. The gospel presupposes and validates the belief in spiritual life, which though not to be consciously separated from the totality of our present mode of existence is yet the true life of man, since it is that which separates him from the animal and makes him in the image of God who is Spirit. Indeed, one might define the gospel as the exposition of the nature, the moral possibilities, and the certain triumph over the impersonal elements of our person, of the spiritual life as it is finally revealed in the historical Jesus. And this spiritual life, the gospel always insists, reaches its moral power only as it is in renewing union with the Holy Spirit that comes to the followers of the Lord who is the Spirit.

III

I am convinced that any faithful exploration of social and individual experience will confirm this formulation of the heart of the gospel. It is because men believed in these fundamental spiritual verities, as well as in the figures and ethnic hopes in which they were expressed, that Christianity cut loose from Judaism, conquered the Roman empire, and is still operative in our evolving civilization. The gospel includes moral and social ideals which are more than visionary because they have been incarnated in an actual life. It is more than a philosophical generalization, because it is grounded on the experience of the cosmic spiritual life by definitely historical persons. It has become dynamic through the ages because it has reached the motive forces of character as something based upon facts made intelligible to different ages through the medium of the best thinking of those ages.

Doctrine-making is a social process which transcends the individual's expression of his own spiritual life. Dogmas are the authoritative formulations by which the social mind of any age makes intelligible to itself its religious experience. A theological system to be effective must correlate all germane

religious facts with the ultimate and controlling conceptions of its day.

It has been thus that the gospel has been brought into dynamic relations with each successive and essentially new social mind and thus maintained the continuity of the spiritual content of human experience through historical changes. The third century brought it into regenerating unity with its experience through its "essence" philosophy, and its belief in an eternally begotten Logos consubstantial with God the Father. The Middle Ages used it to work out the social and political reconstruction involved in the magnificent though impracticable program of a Holy Roman Empire. The Reformers brought it home to human life through the agency of a new estimate of the worth of the individual born of an enlarging world-consciousness. The modern man can make it a source of individual and social regeneration by interpreting it to himself and to his world through those conceptions that are the best channels to the center of his intellectual and spiritual being.

1. While a completely systematized theology is not necessary to the success of an attempt to bring the gospel to the modern man, in the very nature of the case, we must, if possible, find some coördinating principle that on the one hand shall bring the ele-

ments of the gospel into harmony with the controlling world-view. If such a unifying thought is to be true to the gospel, it must be an equivalent of the messianic formula. Indeed, the method of equivalency must control the entire presentation of the gospel if it is to be true to its original content. For, as we have already seen, the gospel was not merely a group of truths and facts; it was also the valuation of those truths and facts in terms of messianism in the interest of the spiritual man. That is to say, it was the historical form given to ultimate spiritual realities, which form itself, in so far as it, too, was the expression of the spiritual life, has permanent value. For we cannot altogether separate except in thought the elements of a religion of the Spirit. If only it can assimilate the proper elements from its intellectual and social environment it is enriched and strengthened. And this has been true of the Christian life. But it has always expressed itself in thought forms that enabled it to function in particular historical situations, and these thought forms themselves are useful only as they enable the spiritual life inspired by the gospel to express itself normally. The endeavor to find equivalents for the successive organs of spiritual self-expression is not an uncritical perpetuation of the identical New Testament conceptions or those of later

dogmas. Terms used to express a thoroughly socialized concept grow symbolic rather than strictly definitive. In religious history they are the points of contact at which the spiritual life of one age realizes its unity with and draws inspiration from the spiritual life of the past; the means by which experience is aided by experience to enriched development.

Let us then briefly attempt the discovery of the modern equivalents of messianism; that is to say, of the concepts in which the content of the gospel as above formulated can be made to minister to the religious life of the modern man.

The general scheme of messianism involves in itself certain component concepts which, despite the unaccustomedness of their formal expression, are obviously contained in our modern world-view. The three most important of these concepts are the sovereignty of God, eschatology, and salvation. The equivalents of these three elements are fundamental for any attempt to set forth the gospel from the point of view of the modern man.

1. The first equivalent is that for the belief in the sovereignty of God.

Sovereignty was an analogy, but it was the most inclusive analogy under which the ancient world which shaped our ecumenical orthodoxy undertook

to set forth its conception of God. The modern man with his democracy and his science can hardly be expected to get full value from either the concept or the terms of such a world-view. God is more than a sovereign. He is *God*. Yet sovereignty expresses a reality which cannot be overlooked — God as the ultimate and controlling reality in human life both individual and social. We do not look to Him to find any likeness to the oriental monarch, but regarding Him as immanent Life, beneficently working through, determining and expressing Himself in the age-long process which involves both matter and history, we conceive of Him, not as Process, but as the source and guide of all progress. Humanity must submit to and conform to God, conceived of not as politically but as cosmically personal. Here the conception of the God of law persists, with the difference that law is no longer regarded as the statutory enactments of a sovereign but as the expression of God's rational and beneficent will as seen in the very nature of things and most of all in the spiritual order from which we derive authority and assistance for our own spiritual life.

2. The second equivalent is that for eschatology.

I am aware that at this point I am very likely to part company with some of those who may have agreed with the positions thus far taken. Eschatology, with

its salvation by catastrophe and its strange imagery, seems to many quite beyond the range of possibility of acceptance by the modern man. But unless I mistake completely, persons holding such an opinion fail to approach the subject with full historical sympathies and so fail to analyze the actual content of the concept. Eschatology, it is true, as represented in the Jewish apocalypses is a bizarre mixture of symbols, but he is a superficial student of the ancient world who can see in these apocalypses nothing that reaches into the depths of religious faith. When one ceases to look at it in its broad lines, eschatology at once appears to have been something more than an irridescent dream.

In the first place it was a pictorial presentment in terms of catastrophe of what we should call the teleology of social evolution. For it was primarily a politico-social hope. It looked not to a theological heaven, but to a social order, the kingdom of God. Its very heart was confidence in that divine deliverance which God was to give His people by establishing through the national Saviour an actual, triumphant, and ideal society. Catastrophe was only incidental to such a hope. It was simply the way in which the ancient world conceived of God's accomplishing his redemptive purpose in human history.

Eschatology, in the second place, included the hope of personal immortality and resurrection. Immortality was involved in the new social order which God was to establish, since all the subjects of the kingdom were to share in its blessings. The resurrection was not that of the physical body from the grave, but, if we correctly interpret Josephus, was a formula for expressing the Pharisees' belief in the efficient and superior form of individual existence to be enjoyed by the righteous.

A third belief which eschatological pictures expressed was that of the inevitableness of the postponed outcome of forces resident in national and individual character. In its picture of the Judgment Day it set forth a profound conviction common to all humanity; that which the Buddhist expresses in his doctrine of Karma and which the apostle epitomized in his axiom "what a man sows that he shall also reap"; that which the modern idealist finds in the triumph of an absolute spiritual order: — the conviction that moral actions are moral forces producing results. In a universe like ours, goodness ultimately cannot bring forth pain; badness ultimately cannot bring forth happiness. To believe otherwise would be to distrust the reason and goodness of the immanent God himself.

These three conceptions, the future divinely established social order, personal immortality involving a further advance of the regenerate individual through the resurrection, and the inevitableness of pain or blessing as the outcome of character because of God's working in the moral-personal realm — these were the heart of early Christian eschatology. Each is in a way the inheritance taken over from Judaism, but none of them is merely formal or pictorial. Each possesses an ethical content as truly as a religious. Feasts with Abraham, heavenly tabernacles, a New Jerusalem let down from heaven, cosmic catastrophes, the judgment throne and the lake of fire, are the picture forms in which the regenerate society, the regenerate individual, and the finality of the moral order are set forth. Such fundamental beliefs as these cannot safely be lost from any religion. Paradoxical as it may seem, eschatology in these equivalents brings the gospel into closest touch with the thought of the modern world. Any man who, in the spirit of the New Testament, would attempt scientifically to minister to our day must embody it in his message. He cannot omit the effects of God's presence and activity in social evolution, the future of the individual, the triumph of righteousness and the spiritual order.

3. Thus, thirdly, messianism, because it is eschatological is but a part of the supreme conception of divine salvation which the gospel revealed. In that conception there are involved two elements: that of the kingdom of God and that of the triumph of the individual over sin and death. The first demands that our theology be social; the second that it make a free, social, spiritual individuality the supreme result of the redemptive process.

IV

Just what sort of theology will result from such equivalents it is not our purpose to consider in detail, nor is it so important as the question as to what sort of contribution the gospel can make to the totality of our spiritual life. Philosophical and theological precision is here secondary to vital efficiency. Yet such efficiency must to no inconsiderable degree rest upon the reasonableness of the evangelic message. Nor need we here lose heart. Indispensable as is the final test of its individual and social efficiency, our faith is not based on cunningly devised fables or laboriously devised definitions. Suffice it to say that the constituent truths of the gospel can fairly be correlated with the facts given by various sciences into working hypotheses that can be tested by

human experience, and so systematized into reasonable acceptability by some controlling concept of the modern social mind. Metaphysical explanations and justifications we can leave to that type of theology that prefers to begin with theories of knowledge and the formative assumptions of a philosophy of religion. Our own field is that of the creatively active personality finding, under the guidance of the gospel, completest expression and realization in personal relations with other personalities and with the God of the ever progressing universe.

The true content of the gospel should not be obscured by any analysis of its elements. Within our humanity it sees two warring forces, the one lusting back to the fleshpots of pleasure and the comforts of that impersonal life from which humanity has so valiantly struggled to be free; the other ever striving for self-expression in that increasingly supranatural spiritual life in which, be it never so dimly, it has ever seen its goal. Freedom and salvation can come only as this higher life of the spirit triumphs. And the way to this triumph the gospel shows in its insistence that it is possible for those who are in dynamic union with God, and in its historical presentation of Jesus as its perfectly individualized expression. In him was life and the life is the light of men. To

be saved is to live that life; to live it is to be saved. That is the heart of the gospel. All else is naturalism and the distractive allurement of Illumination.

Because Christianity thus opens the way to the full realization of the spiritual life, it is redemptive. To make the gospel anything else than a message of deliverance, both negative and positive, would be to give it a new character. Any religion to be of significance must do something for its followers. The moment it is reduced to a code of divinely authorized worldly wisdom or to a philosophy with merely intellectual appeal, it becomes the property only of the intellectual aristocrat, and even with him it is always exposed to the epigram or the syllogism of some rival. We, as truly as the citizens of the ancient world, have our Satan, our sin, our death. The fact that we do not picture them to ourselves in quite the same way as did the ancient world by no means destroys the evils for which these awful names stand. Those relentless natural forces that would enslave us and ever bring us and all whom we love so much of sorrow — we want to be delivered from them. The sin which so easily besets us and attacks us so unexpectedly and so viciously — we want to be delivered from that. Death, which seems sometimes the very quintessence of waste and irrationality as well

as terror — we want to be delivered from that. Nor would we be saved alone and individually. The sense of the solidarity of human society calls for the regeneration also of the social forces that are always making To-morrow. And here too the gospel meets our needs. It thrills with the hope of the regeneration of the social order. Its God would bring men not only to a heaven beyond death but to the New Jerusalem which is to be set up upon earth, a triumphant order of the spirit in which His will shall be done as it is in heaven.

To establish the reasonableness of this message of a salvation that consists in the social and individual realization of the spiritual life as revealed in Jesus, by showing it to be consistent with the dominant presuppositions of to-day's thought and action, is to evoke a response and allegiance on the part of the modern man as truly as from those who do not share in his view of the universe. But to make such message reasonable is not an end in itself. The gospel does not need above all to be proved to be true. I doubt if many men were ever argued from sin over to God by apologetics. They need to be convinced rather that the act of faith evoked by the presentation of Jesus, even though it be incipient and, as it were, tentative, is justifiable from the point of view of the spiritual

immanence of God, a divinely directed evolution, historical criticism, and the ultimate values of life. This is the method of the true apologetic: not the discussion of the mutual relation of definitions and speculations, nor yet the exposition of the metaphysical truth of various doctrines outside the limits of experience; but the justification of the act of faith in the God revealed in and by Jesus as rationally worthy of a man wholeheartedly at one with the age in which he lives.

Herein lies our next task. Having discovered historically the content of the gospel as a message of divine redemption we shall proceed first to show that it can be accepted by the modern man as reasonable because of its accord with his own constructive thinking, and then shall attempt to show positively that the gospel is a divine dynamic making towards the emancipation and the perfection of personality here and hereafter, and towards that better social order toward which our modern in its constructive moods is looking.

PART II

THE REASONABLENESS OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER IV

JESUS THE CHRIST

THE gospel is a message of individual and social salvation through the spiritual inworking of a God who is at once love and law, revealed in and guaranteed by the experience of the historical Jesus. That is the quintessence of Christian truth. But is this guarantee itself of value? Can we still believe in a gospel that thus involves an historical person like the Jesus the apostles preached?

It is not enough to say that history knows no other Jesus with evangelic power, although such a statement would be undeniable. A prophet of Nazareth, a social reformer, an ethical teacher, a beloved martyr, — neither is the Jesus who has conquered the world. The only Jesus who can reveal and guarantee the evangelic method of deliverance from despair, sin, and death is the Jesus who in the cold light of criticism can be known himself to have conquered

sin and death; who, as the unique and perfect expression of the God-life, determines a man's relation to God.

True, the evangelic message of a God of love who delivers man by reinvigorating him with new spiritual power might still help us even if the Jesus of the New Testament should disappear in the crucible of historical criticism. The religious conception of the universe built up by Christian experience would be still a message of deliverance. Conceivably — but to my mind tragically — Christianity might supplant Jesus. As shaped by the century-long experience of the Christian community, it contains much that is self-validating. Social evolution enlightened by the Christian church would teach us it is better to live in accordance with the supposition that a God of Law is a God of Love, that individual development is not to be stopped short by death, that the spiritual order is superior to the natural, and that a better community is yet to be formed. But, apologetically strong as such a daring, I had almost said reckless, position may be, it is weak indeed when compared with the same teachings backed by an assurance of the trustworthiness of the evangelic picture of a genuinely historical Jesus, the concrete exposition of the supremacy of the spiritual life.

It is inevitable that the gospel should appear at the bar of criticism. However much we may argue that apart from any historical basis the essential truths of the New Testament are in themselves capable of evoking faith, few of us have so accustomed ourselves to the high altitudes of academic thought as to find it possible to gain spiritual uplift in an alleged historic fact we are convinced has become merely "functional." An empty revolver functions admirably as long as the highwayman thinks it loaded, but what if he discovers his mistake? History that has lost its historicity becomes, except perhaps among philosophers, of equally dubious value. Your average modern man has not yet lost his *Wirklichkeitsinn*, to wit, his common sense.

I

In so far as the gospel involves the historical Jesus, in so far must it be amenable to the laws governing historical investigation.

1. Throughout its history the church has been compelled to defend its position against those who have mishandled the historical substratum of its teaching. It was the practice of many of the early sects to produce counterfeit gospels for the purpose of justifying some peculiar view. A considerable number of

these have come down to us either in whole or in part, but with the possible exception of the Gospel of the Hebrews they are utterly unhistorical. In them all there are barely half a dozen incidents or sayings that can be accepted as in any sense genuine. In some cases these gospels contain elaborate descriptions of events preceding the birth of Christ, of his boyhood, of his crucifixion and resurrection, and of his descent to the abode of the departed spirits. The motive in such construction was either to give authority and weight to certain peculiar views or to supply the want of information about some period of Jesus' life. Both purposes are equally open to moral objections from our own point of view.

While it is true that such writings as these testify to the church's belief that Christianity is grounded on history, they also testify to the indifference of the early church to elemental historical accuracy. And this, too, in itself raises difficulties. We have passed from the age in which a doctrine can be substantiated by the manufacture of historical evidence. Indeed, the further we proceed in the comparative study of religion the more are we likely to be convinced that a religion's claim to an historical founder deserves particularly careful investigation. This impression has been deepened by the newer type of historical

criticism. In his zeal for discovering the actual value of historical evidence the critic has at times apparently assumed that everything was a lie until it was proved to be true. We all recall how in the first flush of rewriting Roman history the royal period was thrown into the waste basket. The fault, however, was not due to the method, but to the preconceptions with which critical pioneers undertook their work.

This has been equally true in the case of the gospel records. In too many cases critics have been philologians whose idea of criticism has been that of literary analysis, or dogmatic liberals who loved brilliant conjectures better than sober corroborations. It is true that this phase of criticism is passing as the man with historical feeling has replaced ingenious word-surgeons, and men of method those of *a priori* temperament who made their theories a procrustean bed for historical documents. At the same time, there are still hobby riders in the field of criticism. In some cases this hobby consists in a rearrangement of material and an emendation of text on highly subjective grounds. In other cases it takes the form of an enthusiastic skepticism begotten of a monopoly of some philosophical presupposition. In still other cases negative criticism is due to an excessive ingenu-

ity which reconstructs the gospel history along lines which are all but unintelligible to any one except the critic himself. And in criticism as in everything else it is not well to be too clever.

2. But after all allowance is made for scholarship of this sort the historical method brings us face to face with some very serious questions. When, for example, were our present gospels written, and by whom? The average man has ready only an indistinct answer. The probability is that he regards them as having been written as they stand to-day by the men whose names have been attached to them by copyists. The historical student, however, sees in Matthew, Mark, and Luke the reworking of material very much older than the gospels in their present forms. Matthew, for instance, embodies matter which came from the apostle Matthew but is also in large measure derived from the Gospel of Mark reënforced by material drawn from collections of the sayings of Jesus other than those to be found in Matthew and Luke, the whole being worked together possibly by Matthew himself, but certainly reëdited by unknown writers. Much the same is true in the case of Luke. Even in the case of Mark evidences of redaction are not wanting. The subjective elements and late date of the Fourth

Gospel are admitted by conservative and radical alike.

The first stage of this criticism was thoroughly destructive. The time of writing of the three Synoptic Gospels was placed very late, while that of the Gospel of John was placed somewhere in the second quarter of the second century and even later. Within the past few years, however, critics are dividing themselves into two main groups. By far the larger of these, represented by genuinely historical investigators, has pushed the time of writing back until the oldest strata of the Synoptic Gospels seem to belong to the period prior to the destruction of Jerusalem (65–67 A.D.) and the Gospel of John to the end of the first century. The other and more radical group of critics is numerically small but has been given undue importance by the fact that its members have been given opportunity to express themselves in the pages of the *Encyclopedia Biblica*. For these latter writers the gospels possess small historical value and represent merely the interpretation placed upon Jesus by the early Christians. According to criticism of the first type the figure of Jesus emerges with ever increasing distinctness. According to that of the second school Jesus is continuously retreating into the shadows of the past, until he

becomes barely the name of a man about whom we know with certainty all but nothing.

The modern man will not abandon, he cannot abandon, the historical method because of this difference in the results of its application, but between the presuppositions of these two sets of critics he can hardly fail to choose the more conservative. And for the very good reason that the negative positions reached by the second group imply something which from the point of view of method is close to critical suicide. The results of the less biased criticism on the other hand flow from true historical science. The fact that they have placed the historical foundation of the gospel, in so far at least as concerns the faith of the first disciples, upon unquestionable bases, is damaging evidence only to the man who believes that no method is scientific which proves something. It could not be otherwise in view of the generally accepted views regarding the structure of the Synoptic Gospels, and the chief epistles of Paul. Critical analysis has disclosed material which is older than the gospels themselves in their present form, which can be best described as coming from those whom Luke calls "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," while the epistles of Paul carry us back to the days before this material had been reduced to written form.

3. Yet at this point we reach a new difficulty. That inveterate skepticism which assails every positive evangelic statement having been defeated in the region of the dates of the gospels now assails this original material with the weapons of psychology and a theory of knowledge. In its extreme form it can see in Paul only an obscure man who never did much of anything except make a trip to Rome, and in his letters only lucubrations of an unknown writer of the second century concerning issues a century outgrown. All one can say of these conclusions of van Manen and his little school is that if the negative criticism which destroys the historical existence of Jesus be critical suicide this treatment of the Pauline literature is critical madness.

In its less extreme form the new criticism identifies historical records with experience and holds that all we have in such records is the judgment of value put by the early church upon Jesus. According to this view it is impossible actually to get at the historical Jesus. We can only recover the recollections, the impressions, the enthusiasm, and the faith of his followers. And these results, it is claimed, yield very obscure historical conclusions as to Jesus himself.

Particularly in the case of the resurrection is this objection urged. This school of critics does not doubt

that the early disciples believed that Jesus had appeared to them, but it insists that this belief was due to pure subjectivism. The stories of the resurrection are the visualizing, so to speak, of the faith of the disciples born of intimate companionship with Jesus, and all that the gospel of the risen Christ really amounts to is that the early Christians were so convinced of the messiahship of Jesus that they could not believe that God had allowed him to perish. Under this conviction they thought they saw him. We have in the gospel, therefore, according to this school, correct statements as to what the apostles thought they saw, but no evidence that there was anything for them to see.

Now this reduction of history to experience must be taken seriously. It has enough truth to make it exceedingly difficult to oppose. If one urges that it practically wipes the actual Jesus off the slate of history, one is likely to be met by the indignant asseveration that nothing of the sort is true; that by faith we are sure there was such a Jesus, but that, as we cannot know him apart from the faith of the disciples, we cannot safely accept the account of those episodes in his life in which he differs from ordinary men.

If on the other hand we attempt to argue that the

situation in his case is no different from that of any other historical person, and that we have as much material with which to paint a general portrait of Jesus as of Plato, or Socrates, or even of Marcus Aurelius, we are told, as it were, with a shrug of the philosophical shoulders, that no one of those three men was said to have been raised from the dead. If we reply that it seems extraordinary that so great a movement should have sprung from a man with no climactic experience, and that it would seem as if he must have been more than remarkable not only to compel the allegiance and the supreme definitions of so keen a man as Paul but the God-valuation of the modern theologian himself, our answer is the issuance of the scholar's anathema — unscientific.

Now we must admit that if we allow Jesus to be an ordinary person about whom we know nothing with certainty, we cannot believe in his resurrection. And it is also necessary to admit that when a person is dead we cannot know him except in the sense that we know something which people say about him. But that by no means proves that there was not in the character of Jesus something which warranted his contemporaries' estimate of him, and further warrants our acacceptance of that estimate as the basis for our own conduct. I never heard Webster speak, and I am

ready to make all allowance for excessive admiration as well as for excessive dislike in the stories that have come down to us concerning him. But I have not the slightest doubt that Webster was an orator and statesman. I have no means of meeting the person Socrates, and I am perfectly ready to admit that the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues may be an idealized portrait of the Socrates who nagged the Athenians into thinking about serious matters and preferred the market place to companionship with Xantippe. But I have no doubt that Socrates lived, and that he was of sufficient importance in philosophy to warrant the portraits which Plato and Xenophon drew of him. I certainly cannot think of him as a mere lay figure on which Plato hung his own thoughts.

Similarly in the case of Jesus. It is desirable to distinguish as far as possible between the real Jesus and those estimates and descriptions with which the New Testament writers present him. But why should we not get positive results from the criticism as well as negative?

The pressing task for the systematic theologian is not so much that of the apologete who tries to find the irreducible minimum, and builds therefrom, as it is the constructive use of the results of a criticism which has brought us beyond a reasonable perad-

venture face to face with the beliefs of the original Christians. The business of a positive theology is not to discover how much of that primitive belief can be omitted, but how much of it is really correlatable with other things we know, and so is capable of being built inductively into a positive message for to-day's life.

The question as to a real Jesus back of the experience and faith of the first disciples must be answered by historians, not by metaphysicians. At the very outset we must have done with the analogy which finds a Jesus *an sich* as a sort of equivalent of the *Ding an sich* of metaphysics. It would be difficult to imagine a more unjustifiable source of confusion than the parallel which is drawn between the metaphysical difficulty of distinguishing the phenomenon from the noumenon and the difficulty of distinguishing between historical testimony and the person or event to which the testimony is brought.

II

This is not the place in which to trace in detail the working of the historical method by which the Jesus of history is found. It must suffice to set forth as succinctly as possible its results as an answer to the question, Is there more than one Jesus in the New

Testament? And to avoid any suspicion of manipulation of material we will formulate these results as they come: from the Synoptic Gospels, the Pauline literature, and the Johannine literature.

1. The Jesus of history as gained by a study of the oldest strata of the synoptic material has been sometimes described as a prophet, that is to say, a teacher, more or less under the limitations of the messianic hope of his day, but one who did not regard himself as the Christ and whose "mighty works" the historian cannot regard seriously. Such a view, however, is undeniably the minimum result of the projection of a dogmatic position into historical processes. A properly historical examination must give a different formulation. There are certain deeds ascribed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels as they stand to-day, which are not to be found in the oldest strata of material; but, even in the case of the Infancy sections, their absence does not affect the general estimate which we must place upon him. The historical Jesus can still be described by the study of the reports of his words and deeds and his own self-consciousness as contained in these oldest sources which have been preserved in our Synoptic Gospels. In their light we must say that he was a person of moral perfection, possessed of remarkable powers to work cures through

the evoking of faith on the part of others; a teacher who carried to what, so far as we can see, are their final results, the religious and ethical possibilities and conceptions of humanity; a religious master whose very life was an imperative call to trust in the fatherly love of God; and, although he never explicitly demanded such faith of his disciples, one who regarded himself as such an altogether unique manifestation of the Spirit of God as to be able to deliver men from sin and misery and death. Whether or not he concealed for a while this belief in his messianic vocation, he found, in the depths of his consciousness, impulses, ideals, volitions, and powers which he believed sprang from the presence of the Father who was thus empowering him for his supreme mission.

This self-estimate is one of the integral parts of the original gospel message. So far from being tenable appears to me the dictum of Schweitzer: "The Jesus of Nazareth who appeared as Messiah, taught the ethics of the kingdom, and died to consecrate his work never lived. He is a figure sketched by rationalism, called to life by literalism, and supplied by modern theology with the clothing of historical science."

2. The Pauline conception of Jesus is that of a heavenly Christ who became incarnate because of

the love of God, who died as a sacrifice and was raised from the dead, who already exercises his control over his community, who sends the Holy Spirit to the followers, and who will return from heaven to establish his kingdom.

It cannot be questioned that this Pauline conception of Jesus differs somewhat from Jesus' own estimate of himself as recorded in our gospels, but it is rather in the manner of a developed interpretation than of a radically different estimate. It starts with the messianic valuation, and presupposes a knowledge of the historical Jesus. The Pauline letters were without exception written to persons who already had in their possession the elements, at least, of our Synoptic Gospels. His effort was not so much, therefore, to set forth the facts of Jesus' life as to show how an already existing faith in Jesus could shape itself to the exegencies of actual situations. Wherever he finds it necessary to refer to matters which lie within the range of the synoptic material, it is only a hypersensitive criticism which can discover radical discrepancies. Paul's God is the same Heavenly Father whom Jesus revealed. To Him as reconciled Jesus leads men, and in the great consummation He will be all in all. Paul's elaboration of the significance of Jesus, though enriched by his own experi-

ence and culture, is steadily along the line of Jesus' own estimate of himself as the revelation of God's power of spiritual salvation in terms of messiahship.

The world of scholarship at the present time is deeply concerned in the comparison of the Jesus of Paul with the Jesus of the synoptists. This brief statement will indicate that, in my opinion, despite their differences, the two are fundamentally the same, the differences in portrayal being due to the method of exposition and the momentary exigencies of the apostle's thought. Indeed, after a careful examination of the facts in the case, I am inclined to go farther and to say that the man who wishes to understand the significance of Jesus cannot do better than to face Paul's problems and find in Jesus his own answers thereto.

3. Even more pronounced discrepancies have been found between the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel and the Jesus of the synoptists. But a dispassionate examination will show that these differences lie again in the region of interpretation. There are no significant details of the life of Jesus given in the Johannine writings that are not already to be found, at least in kind, in the Synoptic Gospels. True, the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel introduces the Logos doctrine,

but it is a valuation of Jesus that can be traced only with difficulty throughout the gospel as a whole. The persistent valuation there is again messianic. The chronology, also, of the messianic revelation is not that of the synoptists, but when we are quite assured as to the proper order of the Johannine material, it is altogether probable that most of these difficulties will disappear. If one allows for the practical and apologetic use which the Fourth Gospel makes of the facts of Jesus' career, he will find in it precisely the same elements that are to be found in the synoptics. True, the line of demarcation between fact and interpretation is in many places impossible to draw, and the portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is theological and religious rather than baldly biographical; but the real Jesus is there as well as the author's comment, explanation, and valuation.

To such conclusions as this, despite its eddies, the main current of modern scholarship with its exploration of the consciousness of Jesus, its analysis of the religious experience of his first interpreters, and its insistence on historical rather than dogmatic procedure, seems to me to be moving. Varieties of interpretative details are undeniably in the New Testament, but they are interpretations that radiate from

the same historical center. If one starts with incidental statements and unique analogies, it is easy enough to find in the New Testament only more or less discordant descriptions of Jesus. If, because of temperament or presupposition, one prefers differences to agreements, these discordant descriptions will seem antagonistic. But if one starts with Jesus and his own estimate of himself as included in the oldest materials of the gospels, it is possible to see how Christian experience in making real to itself the value of that supreme person could use all these figures and valuations, and yet cherish the Figure himself unchanged. The unity of a circle lies at the point from which the radii emerge rather than in some point in the circumference which for the moment attracts one's attention. In the case of the New Testament that center is the historical Jesus of the sources interpreted as the Christ — the one whom God had empowered by His own resident spirit to be a Saviour.

III

The relation of any creative personality to the movement which it inaugurates is always complicated. In some cases the founder of a religion becomes the controlling factor of its entire history. His words become a veritable law which it is sacrilege

to break. In other cases the movement sweeps away from its founder, and takes up into itself such various elements as to become quite other than that originally intended. In still other cases the founder of a religion disappears historically, and the religion that bears his name is in utter ignorance as to his personality. In no religion except Christianity, however, unless it be Buddhism, is the personality, as distinguished from the teachings of its founder, of actual religious value. Even Mahomet is only the Prophet of Allah.

Christianity is here unique in that it has always made the personal experience of Jesus its center. The teaching of the church has emphasized the facts rather than the teaching of Jesus. Take from Christian theology the person, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus, and there would not be much Christian theology left. True, at the present time Protestantism is complementing its emphasis upon these historical aspects with the ideals set forth in the gospel, which are, to a considerable extent at least, independent of historical episodes in the life of Jesus. Indeed, it must be added that there is a tendency, by no means weak, to dehistoricalize Christianity altogether and make it into a religious philosophy as indifferent to the historical Christ as Zoroastrianism

is to Zarathustra. But, as I shall repeatedly insist, such a procedure is to create a different sort of religion from the Christianity the centuries have known, and, in its efforts to avoid the Scylla of higher criticism, is sure to fall into the grip of the Charybdis of philosophy. If Christianity is to possess genuinely religious power, it must remain true to the gospel which makes the historical personality of Jesus an actual contribution to religious history.

The gospel, however, is not simply a biography. Merely to believe that Jesus existed is not to have religious faith. It is conceivable that he might have lived in Nazareth or some obscure city of Ephraim and been all that he was as far as his personal experience of God is concerned, and yet have been of no religious significance. If, then, some search of ancient records had found that he thus lived, one could, in the scientific spirit, assent to the fact, and yet remain in such ignorance as to his real significance as to see in him simply a footnote of religious history. The real significance of the historical Jesus lies in the fact that in him the Spiritual Life for which humanity has searched was perfectly brought in terms of time and human relationships. He is more, even, than a mere example; he is a datum for religious induction as truly as the earthworms studied by Darwin were

data for the exposition of the laws of life. In him we have demonstrated the power of that spiritual life to triumph over sin and death. Despite the jeers of the crowds at the cross, the deliverance about which Jesus talked was actually accomplished in his own life. Deprived of its knowledge of this, as it were, successful experiment in the spiritual life, the gospel becomes simply an ideal which stands over against the real world of human endeavor in much the same way as the Platonic world of ideas stands over against the world of experience.

But this is not to exhaust the content of the significance of the Jesus of history. He is not simply a datum to be treated as independent of the Christian community. Darwin's earthworm was not the founder of evolution. Jesus was the founder of Christianity. And he founded it as something more than a teacher. His paramount place in history was given him by those who loved him, saw in him God's Messiah, and followed him and his teachings as they would follow the veritable God Himself, to the death. The Jesus of history became the Christ of experience. Personal love of a historical character was transformed into religious faith in him as more than a person *in* history.

In this Jesus shared in our common lot. A man

can be a teacher only when some one is taught, a leader only when there are those who are led. Socrates without Plato would not have been the Socrates centuries have honored. Jesus the historical person of Galilee and Jerusalem became the Saviour of the centuries as he became the Christ of the Christian community. That is to say, as he evoked faith in himself as the divine Saviour.

We are accustomed to the discussion as to whether the "Christ of experience" is the Jesus of history. The distinction, as has already been implied, is, with proper limitations, legitimate. But there is need here of clear thinking. Analysis discovers several "Christs of experience." There are: the Jesus who lies behind the earliest documents of Christianity; the Messiah of the completed New Testament literature; the metaphysical Son of God, the incarnation of the Logos of the creeds and the theologians; the "essential" Christ found by moderns in history and Christian experience and worshiped by the church as God, all but detached from the original Jesus. With which of these concentric personal ideals of the spiritual life can the modern man concern himself?

To an extent at first unrealized, with them all. But he is to keep central the Jesus of history. Then as he recapitulates, as it were, in his own experience

that development of definitions and values of Jesus which has marked the faith of the church does he come to see that, to use Wenley's terms, the historical Jesus who *was* is the metahistorical Christ who *is*. If his starting point be the Jesus of the sources and if his attitude be religiously sympathetic, his valuation will proceed along the line followed by the first disciples. Jesus will himself compel his acceptance as the divine Saviour, and the modern man's Credo will, to that extent at least, be the equivalent of that of the Christian community of all ages.

1. Fortunately we can recover the essential content of the first confession of faith in Jesus as Christ. It was not a merely formal definition. In ascribing to Jesus the messianic dignity, the apostles and their converts were using a well-recognized term of value that implied rather than presupposed a metaphysical estimate of his person. The historical and comparative study so characteristic of recent years gives us the content with some precision. The apocalypses, the sayings of the rabbis, the expectations of the masses, notwithstanding their differences, are here at one. The Christ was to be more than a popular hero; he was to be more than a conqueror. As has already been said, he was to be the one whom God's Spirit empowered to save His people. That is the

very heart of the messianic hope that among the Jews reached its most perfect expression in the Seventeenth Psalm of Solomon. Its elements are there clear: the presence through unction (or, as the Greek would say, incarnation) of God in a human individual; and the sinless character and redemptive office and power given that individual by such divine presence. This deliverance to be accomplished was described sometimes in terms of ordinary politics, sometimes in terms of catastrophe; but it always implied moral elements. The new Israel was to be imperial because it was to be composed of "sons of God," a "holy people." "The tribes shall be sanctified;" "in holiness shall he lead them all, and there shall no pride be among them that any should be oppressed" — this was the noblest hope of Pharisaism. A Christ that did not save the righteous would be the Antichrist.

And these elements we find in the messianic title the early Christians gave their Master. With it they doubtless transferred also their inherited beliefs as to preëxistence and origin, but Paulinism no more than Judaism centered about such quasi-metaphysical conceptions. Spiritual life, goodness, power to bring individual and social salvation, through the resident Spirit of God, these are the central

elements of the messianic valuation wherever found in the New Testament. It was because the historical Jesus actually was believed by his immediate friends to possess these characteristics that the messianic title was given him. That is their persistent and unanimous Christology. And these characteristics the modern man also can discover in the historical Jesus and in the Jesus who has worked in history. Age after age has sought to express its estimate of his redemptive power in its own equivalent of the messianic description. The resulting definitions have not always been regarded as such equivalents, and the development of authoritative ecclesiastical dogma has sometimes obscured their functional office. But here again historical insight should enable the modern man to perceive the continuous spiritual content rather than divergent concepts in theological valuation. Discovering it, be his metaphysical formula what it may, he knows Jesus as the revelation of a redemptive God, and in his own terms expresses his own equivalent for that eternal power of Jesus to elevate and deepen the spiritual life which the early Christians described as messianic.

2. From this point of view the modern man can appreciate and, in the equivalent terms of his own thinking, can derive help from the evangelic estimate

of the holy life of Jesus. That, too, is implied by the messianic valuation in terms of superhuman spiritual life as it was revealed in the field of morals.

In the same proportion as we know what sin is do we know what righteousness is. The older world to whom sin meant something static or negative or even substantial could discuss as to whether Jesus *could* not or *did* not sin. To the modern man such a question is all but unintelligible. Morality is not quantitative. It is a relation of the individual to his situation, a matter of social adjustment rather than of absolute standards, however true it may be that righteousness as an attitude of soul is timeless. Actions are not good; a man is good. Moral struggle which we see so clearly on the pages of the gospel records of Jesus is only what would be expected of spiritual life marked by moral perfection. New duties came to Jesus with the same interrogation as that with which they come to all men. In him as in all humanity there was the struggle between the spiritual and the physical elements of personality. In the wilderness when he faced his own ideals, by the lake side when men would make him king, on the mountain side when Peter urged him to choose the lower idea of messiahship, in Gethsemane when the apparent unrighteousness of defeat tempted him to escape,

and on the cross when the awful doubt of God's own goodness beset him, Jesus faced genuinely moral issues. And there is yet to be shown any clear evidence that he ever chose the secondary in preference to the supreme good. The spiritual always was supreme. Prescientific views of nature, to some measure at least, he seems to have shared with the men of his day; but his moral decisions were infallible. He was sinless. He, rather than his teaching, is our final standard of the moral life. And what is even more, his perfection has revealed that the spiritual life can triumph in the moral field.

So at least the heart of humanity as a whole has testified. Those who have questioned the ethic of Jesus have in reality charged him with not agreeing with their own theories of right. He who sees in Jesus one genetically related with the process in which our race is involved can see how in truth he was subject to the backward pull of humanity, how he could be tempted in all points like as we, and yet be without sin. For temptations may spring from the tendency of a good to dominate a life to which it has contributed and by which it has been outgrown, or they may spring from without in the form of some suggestion to unworthy action made by an individual (like Peter at Philippi) or a society (like Pharisaism as an aggres-

sive institution) not under the domination of the same high ideals of him to whom it is made.

We find here one of those contradictions that still further set Jesus apart from all those who have lived the life of the spirit. Not only have we no record of his having yielded to temptation, but we have no record of his ever having used in his teaching any experience of repentance and forgiveness. Had Jesus possessed the remembrance of such experience, we should indubitably have had from him, with his pellucid honesty and hatred of hypocrisy, some word as to the peace which follows the consciousness of forgiveness. Even less absolutely honest men like Augustine and Pascal abound in such consciousness, and with Paul it is central. This silence is his own greatest testimony to his own sense of moral perfection. And, what is an almost equal marvel, men never read such forgiveness between the lines of his call to repentance.

Yet the sinlessness of Jesus was not a negative quantity. He did not merely keep himself from doing that which was wicked; he was no moral valetudinarian kept from sin by a removal from the world of actual endeavor. The sinlessness of Jesus was positive. He kept from doing wrong by doing right. In him spiritual life reached moral perfection

as it expressed itself in love. Because of this supreme fact the gospel is again more than a philosophy. Its message of the way of salvation is not that of teaching which, like Buddhism, bids men kill desire. The perfect spiritual life of Jesus expressed itself in actual historical social relations. That is one reason why he has always so appealed to life. In the same proportion as men have made him an abstract doctrine, be it never so precisely formulated, his power over human hearts has wavered. Those have gained most from him who have become as it were little children, seeing in him help rather than a problem. He dealt not with universals, but with the universal as conditioned by the exigencies of actual life. The spirit of the Lord was upon him to strengthen him to such homely deliverance as giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, the gospel to the poor.

> "And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought."

In this exposition we see not merely a perfect life, but we see the type of the perfect life. For in the life of love which Jesus lived even to the sacrifice of Calvary, we see the quality and the content of the life of the spirit. That is the real meaning of sinless-

ness. Spirituality consists in love. To be perfect like God is to be loving like Jesus. The spiritual life seeks not poverty but wealth of self-expression. "I came," said Jesus, in that marvelous verse of the Fourth Gospel: "that they may have life and may have it abundantly."

This social content of the spiritual life it is that gives Jesus his supreme position among the founders of religions. Moral perfection must come to others as it came to him through the expression of the life of the spirit in ordinary human surroundings. His followers were not to be taken from the world. Asceticism, self-depreciation, abnormality in any form, are no part of spiritual living. To be like Jesus a man must not withdraw from life; he must plunge into life. But in so doing he must maintain the perspective of values which Jesus himself maintained. Only thus can he approximate that perfection which on its negative side is sinlessness and on its positive side is self-sacrificing, loving service to one's world.

3. Yet moral perfection is not the greatest and most vital quality men have seen in Jesus. They have not only admired, they have worshiped him, and have been saved by him. Through faith in himself he evokes the spiritual life and compels its allegiance. We are not now speaking metaphysically, but simply

historically. Doubt or explain such faith by whatever psychology or philosophy one prefers, the fact remains. Men have found the salvation of God in him.

It could not be otherwise if he were what he believed himself to be. In the light of the history of the term, to be the Christ meant to Jesus that God was present in his person as the source of his redemptive power. It is confidence in this estimate — an estimate which was the property of Jesus as truly as of his first interpreters, — that lies back of the emphasis which historical orthodoxy placed upon Jesus as the Son of God. The doctrine of the Trinity, although it sprang in part from the irrepressible tendencies of Greek Christians toward metaphysics, when formulated in the creeds of Nicæa and Constantinople, was really the outcome of a sense of the need of a divine redemption for sinful man. That very shibboleth of orthodoxy, the word "consubstantial," was something more than a term of mere metaphysics. Employed as it was because it expressed not so much what the Athanasians believed as what the Arians did not believe, it gives no support to the charge that the Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries were fighting over a diphthong. The real issue was whether the redemption actually experienced

by those who had believed in Jesus was wrought by God or by some being neither man, God, nor angel. From the point of view of that sort of logic which cleverly disembowels conclusions from major premises, the arguments against which Athanasius and the Western world contended are unanswerable. But the trinitarian formula was something more than a speculation as to the nature of the Godhead before the birth of Jesus. It was an attempt to express a final judgment of value in terms of metaphysics. A divine salvation argued a divine Saviour. That for which Athanasius stood could not be expressed accurately in any term at his disposal. The difficulty with the entire discussion lay in its attempt to deal with ultimate terms, and ultimate terms cannot be defined. But the significance of God can be expressed by symbols, and His nature in some way pictured by combining terms which can neither be taken with scientific accuracy nor combined in a precise resultant. That is exactly what men claimed when they talked about the "eternal begetting of the Son" and of his "consubstantiality" with the Father. Technical descriptions of God in the terms of Sabellius and Arius are undoubtedly more intelligible, logically speaking, than are the formulas of the Nicene creed. But their very intelligibility is an argument

against them. Their precision of definition is gained by the exclusion of values.

And, unless I altogether mistake, the modern man with his presupposition as to the immanence of the Spiritual Life, or, as the Greeks called it, the Logos, and his growing knowledge that truth cannot be reduced to deductive syllogisms, will, if only he will use words not too rigorously, unexpectedly find himself in sympathy with the Nicene formula as that which on the whole best expresses in the terms of "essence" philosophy the value which his own religious nature finds in the Jesus of the gospel, who was the Christ of Paul. True, he is more interested in the historical "person" than in metaphysical "natures," but a Jesus who is a teacher about God is of vastly different worth to humanity than a Christ who, like the bit of carbon blazing with the electric current, is an individual made incandescent by the actual presence of God, the immanent Spiritual Life upon which our own spiritual life rests. Many questions as to the person of Jesus must be held open as long as they wait upon the researches of honest criticism, but they cannot invalidate the conviction that, however feeble and inadequate our vocabularies may be, we have in Jesus God redemptively revealed in an individual personality. The modern man has assured

himself that Jesus is man of very man, but in his surrender to him through faith, he will be restless until he also feels in him God of very God. And however he reaches this conclusion, whether it be through the high altitudes of discussion as to the nature of the Logos, or, distrusting all metaphysics, through a Thomas-like surrender to the historical Jesus, he finds in it a satisfaction of his deepest spiritual needs.

The Christian salvation has thus become an element of the experience of the centuries. Jesus is the one person to whom we can look with religious faith. Plato and Socrates and Gotama Buddha are among our teachers; but Western civilization, waiving all questions as to his metaphysical deity, worships Jesus as the only person who can bring to its members and to itself a sense of divine forgiveness and an experience of regeneration.

4. Such a miracle — for what other word pictures the situation? — in the range of spiritual experience inevitably forces the modern man, if only he will think long enough, into essential harmony with the evangelic conception of Jesus' messianic personality. He himself becomes a miracle. Miraculous, let us hasten to say, not in the sense that there is in him any violation of the constructive laws of

nature, but miraculous in the sense that in him spiritual experience finds an exception in terms of perfection. Jesus was not apart from humanity. To doubt that was as hateful a heresy to the fathers of orthodoxy as to doubt his deity. He lived subject to the conditions which control the relations of the individual in any given historical environment. But in him those relations were perfectly maintained in terms of freedom possible only to the divine will. If God were to have become individualized in the historical situation set by the Judaism of the first century of our era, we believe he would have lived as Jesus lived. But such way of living, this quality of the spiritual personality as exhibited in social relations, is independent of peculiarities in the historical conditions. That Jesus spoke Aramaic was, as the schoolmen might say, an accident; that he was God incarnate and revealed is a matter of everlasting significance. History here reaches over into religion, not as furnishing a bewildering exception in the spiritual order, but as presenting a perfect and impelling exposition of that order. As Jesus himself said, he was the Son of Man, the exposition in terms of an historical situation of those timeless values that shall characterize the kingdom of God.

5. But the gospel is not content to leave Jesus a sort

of lay figure to be clothed with the ideals of humanity. To use the language of the schools, it conceives of him in terms of existence as truly as in terms of values. It never elaborates metaphysically the problems of his person, but it has its Christologies none the less. For in the exposition of his person as set forth by the writers of the New Testament at least four expositions of his person are given.

There is, first, the conception of unction which is in all four of the gospels; that is to say, the coming of the Holy Spirit upon him at the baptism. The difference between such experience and that of others is sharply defined in the gospels. It differed from that of the prophets by reason of its permanence. The Holy Spirit abode in him. The difference between his and the spiritual experience of the Christian believer is that between the perfect and the imperfect, and even more the difference in function. The Holy Spirit empowered him to save; it empowered others to be saved. The Holy Spirit is repeatedly said by Paul and by Jesus himself to work in both Jesus and those who accept him as the Christ. But in the latter case his work is to lead men into all truth by taking and revealing to them the things of Christ.

Second, there is the concept of Paul of the incarna-

tion in Jesus of the preëxistent Christ. Just how this incarnation was accomplished Paul does not speak unless it be in the great passage of Philippians in which the Christ is said to have emptied himself and to have taken upon himself the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of man. Such a view apparently presupposes the current Jewish belief of preëxistence of souls, and from that point of view is perfectly intelligible. A doctrine of a merely ideal preëxistence of the Christ in my judgment cannot be established from the study of pre-Christian Jewish thought. Every soul was held to be preëxistent, and at the moment of conception was conducted by the angel who had it in charge from the treasure house under the throne of God to its human embryo. From such a point of view it was not difficult to conceive of the Christ as having preëxisted as the Christ and to have been brought into a human body.

In the third place there is the conception of the Logos who became flesh. It has only one clear expression in the New Testament, namely, in the Prologue in the Gospel according to John. In many ways, however, the Logos conception was the Greek equivalent of the Pauline conception of the prehistoric Christ. As a Christian doctrine it differs from that of Philo in that the incarnate Logos was a

means of bringing man and God together, instead of keeping them, as it were, apart.

The word is the means of self-revelation; so the Logos or Eternal Word was the self-revealing aspect of the personality of God, who found self-expression in the individual Jesus. So consonant is this conception with the entire trend of Greek thought under the influence of which the gospel became a theology, that it naturally became the controlling element of Christology and gave rise to the first ecumenical creed. That creed, it is worth noticing, however, was not concerned with the person of the historic Jesus, but with the relations of the prehistoric, eternal Logos with God the Father. Christological discussions prior to the Arian controversy were concerned primarily with the question as to whether the Logos had an actual human body.

Finally, there is the explanation of the person of Jesus through the Virgin Birth as narrated in the opening sections of Matthew and Luke. Nowhere else in the New Testament is there any reference to such birth, although there are a number of passages which are not inconsistent with such a belief. It is not a part of the gospel either of Mark or of John, and is omitted in the Pauline formulation of the gospel as found in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15; it is not in

the list of the "principles" given in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is to be found in the oldest manuscript of the gospel which has reached us, the Sinaitic Syriac version, but at the same time it is there expressly said that Joseph begot Jesus. It first appears in Christian theology in Ignatius, where, however, it is referred to as a currently accepted article of Christian faith.

The attitude of many modern New Testament scholars toward the Virgin Birth is one of unhesitating rejection. Even in the case of men who are not swayed by any anti-miraculous prejudices the evidence that the infancy sections were parts of the original gospel are judged to be not wholly satisfactory. Hardly sufficient weight, however, has been given to the argument for the pre-Christian character of the messianic prophecy found in the songs of Mary and Zacharias. If the sections as a whole were invented by the later Christians in order to explain the messianic formula of the Son of God, it is difficult to see why these messianic descriptions, so admirably expressing the religious conditions under which they are said to have been given, should not have been rewritten. This is true of much other Jewish material, like the Apocalypses of Baruch and Fourth Esdras, where Jewish material was appropriated by

the early church. On the other hand, the argument that is sometimes so passionately urged that without the infancy sections Jesus would be a bastard is faulty in that it disregards the fact that if the sections should be shown to be later additions of the Christian church the entire story of his birth disappears.

The tendency of the more conservative modern theologians is towards an apologetic position. Whether or not the infancy stories shall survive the test of criticism now in progress, the messianic person of Jesus as it stands revealed in the entire New Testament literature is unaffected. On all sides it is agreed that the disciples accepted him as the Christ without any knowledge of the Virgin Birth. Paulinism radiates not from the manger but from the cross and the tomb. If these sections should ever be rejected by theologians as a whole I cannot see that there would be any vital change made in the evangelical message. The Nicæan formula, with its philosophy of the two natures, would have to be replaced by others which would utilize other concepts to express the idea of the incarnation of the deity, but that is already necessary in any case for those who have rejected the "essence" philosophy of the Greek schools. It is not too much to say that already in modern theology belief in the deity of Christ does not rise and fall

with the historicity of the infancy sections. The modern man who has found Jesus a Saviour can await without apprehension the final decision of historical criticism as to their origin and historical value. In any case he has the Christ of Paul.

It should not be overlooked, however, that there is a common element running through all four of these explanations of the superhuman person of Jesus. In them all he is said to be the embodiment and the expression of God's Spirit. The Logos doctrine is only an equivalent way of expressing this fact; the Holy Spirit came upon him at his baptism; his pre-existent personality was anointed so that he was the Christ; and that which was born of Mary was said to be due to the working of the Holy Spirit. And in this common element of Christology the modern man finds his approach to the philosophy of the person of Jesus; for he recognizes in it the persistent element which different Christologies have attempted to express. He seeks in his own thought some equivalent concept that shall make real and effective that which the heart of humanity has already accepted as final, namely, that God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

For he cannot fail to see that a divine person is demanded to account for divine influence. While

the modern man may well hesitate to attempt to reintroduce the Hellenistic discussions over the formulas of the metaphysical deity of the incarnate Logos, whoever recognizes the relationship of mind and body knows that spiritual strength presupposes something very close to that which the first masters of theology called "substance" and "nature." True, their philosophy and trichotomous psychology, their distinctions between "essence" and "persons," their theories of personality that made duality of nature and will consistent with unity of person, have passed; but that which they intended to express the religious man with historical intuition will feel is true. The formula of Chalcedon itself in effect forbids a too rigorous philosophy as to the way in which the Logos and man became one Person in Jesus. Despite all warnings humanity will make its adventurous metaphysical definition of the Person who compels such supreme valuations. Worth is obverse of being. There must be energy in Jesus sufficient to evoke his valuation as God. Shakespeare in the world of poets was born a Shakespeare capable of winning the world's admiration as a supreme poet. Jesus, the embodiment of a saving God, must have been born a potential Saviour. Although there are as yet open questions concerning the historicity of the

stories of the Virgin Birth, a man does not need to withhold religious faith in Jesus until they are answered. He stumbles as he tries to understand some of the Pauline descriptions of a preëxistent Messiah not yet incarnate, and like Paul and the makers of the original Nicene creed, he may be content with a simple formula of incarnation; with his growing perplexity over the relation of God and the individual, of brain and thought, like the makers of the Chalcedonian creed, he may hesitate to commit himself to any psychological explanation of the person of Jesus the Christ. But this he knows: morality is ultimately an expression of the energies, the quality of being. A divine salvation demands a divine Saviour. If action and character are the outgrowth of preceding and conditioning activities, he cannot stop his search for the source of the experience of Jesus with the baptism or with his filial words to Mary in the temple. With the recollection of Jesus' own self-estimate and of his triumphs over those temptations to which humanity as humanity is liable, his knowledge of physiological psychology with its insistence upon the genetic development of personality forces him back to the manger, there to find new meaning in those words to Mary: "That which is born shall be called holy, the son of God." Whatever a man

may hold as to the Virgin Birth, in all reverence may he say, that what the God-man Jesus was among men, the unborn Jesus was among the unborn. For the Spiritual Life of the Universe, that God whom Jesus reveals, even in the mystery of his conception must have touched humanity.

IV

Such an equivalency of the doctrinal interpretations of Jesus may meet with small response from those who, preferring loyalty to undefinable terms, cannot see judgments of value behind metaphysical formulas, and prefer to let differences of terminology obscure the common substance of faith. Still less will it find acceptance from those who see in Jesus only a hypersensitive, ecstatic temperament working under the suggestion of a current eschatology, to whom the first disciples attached their messianic hopes. But Jesus' cautious use of the figures of the apocalypses can serve as the basis of no such hypothesis. Again we can trust the common sense of the modern man. Ecstatics he knows, and alternating personalities, but who is this child of a too-ingenious *religionsgeschichtliche* method and a pathological psychology, who is also the example and savior of a world?

At all events, no man can deny that Jesus has been

a Savior. To express that fact is the real purpose of every Christology. All our philosophies and all our shibboleths cannot obscure or add to this supreme fact. Because of this, men whose response to him has brought freedom and peace and moral power, avoid calling him more than teacher or prophet only by the over-cautious denial of the instinctive response of their spiritual life to the Spiritual Life they find in him. If Jesus has the value of God to the believer, then either that judgment is unjustifiable or Jesus actually possessed that which we may call deity. And if so, then why should we hesitate to confess him as divine and to trust him as divine and to expect from him works worthy of a Son of God?

In other words, just because of the messianic, that is to say the redemptive, worth and accomplishment of Jesus as seen in history and our own experience, we find our faith precipitating itself in a *Credo* by which we endeavor to make the Jesus of history redemptively intelligible to the spiritual life of others. We socialize our faith in words that at least symbolize it in descriptions of his Person. Again, though in the terminology of our modern world, we are at one with the Christian of the past. For the church, the body of believers, secretes its creeds as a living organism secretes its bony structure. To overstimulate the

process may mean death, but to stop it means death just as surely. The real office of formula is to help an age make the experience of salvation intelligible and consistently tenable. It is a social process in that it presupposes community in preconceptions and social experience. Thus it has been and must be with all definitions of Jesus. Their real purpose is practical efficiency. They have differed and must differ, as the social mind itself has changed. But the spiritual content is the same. Authoritative Christology has risen through the efforts of deeply religious men to maintain scientifically or metaphysically both the God-value and the man-value of Jesus. A social mind permeated with Greek thought debated as to the sonship of the Logos before time began, tried to formulate psychologically the relationship of the Logos to the human Jesus, and then, deciding that there were in Jesus two natures, queried if there were one will. These were the questions which the ecumenical councils attempted to answer in accordance with the aid of a philosophy that has disappeared except as it emerges in treatises on theology. Later centuries saw in Christ still other reflections of their controlling interests. To the Franks, as they went plundering through Gaul, he was the God of War. To the mediæval lawyer, he was a feudal lord who gave church and

state in fief. To mediæval schoolmen he was a God who became incarnate to pay by his death the infinite debt due him by finite men. Among reformers he was the judge and the savior of those who trusted him. To men of to-day he is the immanent Spiritual Life of God focalized in a human personality.

Fortunately a man does not need to be evangelically orthodox in order to be evangelical. There is many an honest soul who would not agree with my conclusions who would rival my personal loyalty to Jesus the Saviour. In religion, as in other phases of life, definitions are limitations in proportion as they are believed to be more than symbolic. The modern man is properly impatient of theological shibboleths, as to what we believe *about* Jesus. For faith is not a defining of him in terms of being; it is the actually making of him, as he stands in the New Testament and later human experience, a working, controlling element in God-ward and man-ward self-expression. Faith precedes our attempts to justify its reasonableness. Its evidence is in experience, not in creedal subscription. And back of the kaleidoscope of creeds is the persistent experience of a regenerating, spiritual reconciliation with God mediated by the Jesus who the Christian community believes not only was but is the redemptive revelation of the immanent God.

CHAPTER V

THE LOVE OF THE GOD OF LAW

THE Christ must be a deliverer. But he can only deliver as mankind is convinced that God is like him — Love.

"Deliver us from evil." So Jesus taught his disciples to pray, and the petition is the same if we translate the Greek "Deliver us from the Evil One." For in the mind of the early Christians evil was the work of Satan. Deliverance from his kingdom is coördinate throughout the teaching of Jesus and his apostles with deliverance from sin and death.

Just why physical evil is in the world humanity has never been quite able to discover. It is true that men of all ages have endeavored to extricate some sweetness from the bitter by an exposition of the educational value of suffering, and of all that misery which comes upon humanity from the physical universe. The Hebrew prophet thought of labor itself as a curse which God brought upon men

because of sin, but even the Hebrews in the course of time came to see the blessing which comes to humanity from labor. Later philosophers have also taught us in the spirit of Browning to

> "Welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough;
> Each sting that bids not sit nor stand but go!"

But such philosophy even at its best has never quite satisfied us. Despite it there has always remained a haunting fear of a relentless nature, and from this fear has sprung that cry for help which is the very soul of religion itself. Humanity is at one in the confession that in itself it is physically impotent in the presence of a universe that threatens at any moment to crush it. It may know itself superior to that universe, but such knowledge does not exclude suffering. We cannot find deliverance from impersonal force in anything impersonal. It can be ours only as we live in a spiritual order over which impersonal forces have no control.

I

1. It is from this point of view that one must come to that element of the gospel message that seems so remote to our age, — the deliverance from Satan.

The belief in Satan is one of the sturdiest attempts ever made by human reason to solve the great enigma as to how there can be a good God at the head of things and yet there be suffering throughout His world. Ancient religion, whether you find it in the uplands of Persia, the plains of Mesopotamia, the hills of Athens, the valley of Egypt, or the mountains of Judea, was dualistic. Either the gods themselves were subject to some implacable Fate or there were two gods, the good God and the bad God, Ahura-Mazda and Ahriman, Jehovah and Satan. The explanation was satisfactory for practical purposes. The good God was struggling with the bad God and would ultimately conquer him. But the good God was not in the world and the evil God was. The Jew and the early Christian believed that the prince of this world was Satan. He was to be judged, it is true, and his kingdom was to be overthrown and he himself was to be cast into the lake of fire; but in the present evil age he was, in the wisdom and inscrutable providence of Jehovah, bringing misery. When he was conquered all those who were the loyal subjects of Jehovah would be delivered; but not till then. That was to be the beginning of the messianic bliss.

Neither Persian nor Jew solved the problem which this explanation left unanswered, why such a rule of Satan could be permitted by the good God. It was enough for them to believe that it was, and that some day in the dim, glorious future it would be understood and all evil recompensed. It was this which called forth the sublimest heroism of the Hebrew prophets. They felt the misery of national collapse. They saw the chosen people of Jehovah oppressed rather than supreme; they saw themselves the martyrs of the very people whom they would serve. Yet they disdained pessimism. The nation's suffering was vicarious; the servant of Jehovah was to heal others with his stripes, and in this faith they awaited the day when such deliverance as Jehovah might establish should appear.

And it was an even greater deliverance the gospel foretold for all who followed Jesus' way.

2. The problem of evil has been intensified rather than lessened by the growing conviction that God is immanent, for, if he be immanent, he is certain to be held responsible for the constitution of things as they are. The sad complex of sorrow and suffering to which humanity is exposed has not only been permitted by him but in some way seems due to him. We are not content, for instance, to lay disease to

devils. We see that it is the outcome of biological and chemical forces which are a part of the universe itself. And although few men are philosophers enough to understand Von Hartmann's view that the will of the Deity, in some dark way, sundered itself from the divine reason and thus made a world of misery, the tragic query of our day is, Can the God of Law be the God of Love?

II

1. Possibly it might appear that a question prior to this might be, Can there be any God at all? Materialism as represented by Haeckel would answer this with an emphatic negative. The universe, indeed, is intelligible, but not personal. It has its two cosmic laws, constancy of matter and constancy of force, but there is no such thing as spirit either in man or in the universe.

When such a view is set forth with a wealth of learning it is no easy task to attempt its refutation; and it is becoming generally admitted that a demonstration of the existence of God lies outside the region of pure metaphysics. Since the day of Kant our philosophy has been forced to admit that ultimate conceptions must be self-validating. It is in the realm of practical reason, as Kant would say,

or, as we now prefer to say, in the spiritual order where values are timeless, that religion finds its real support. If we cannot metaphysically prove the existence of God, we can show that it is reasonable and helpful to believe in Him. Only in Him do we find the explanation of our own spiritual life that finds coherence and unity above time and change in the unrelated phenomena and the relentless contradictions of impersonal nature. If there were more ultimate realities than God we should be able to demonstrate His existence. So much at least can be said for a pluralistic universe! But as long as He Himself is ultimate we are estopped treating Him as less than ultimate. We can believe in Him only as we yield to the overwhelming sense of our need of Him, and to the spiritual life with its persistence of values that imply Him. Naturalism in all its forms gets its strength in the region of the intellect. Religion finds its seat in the spiritual region where we admit not only that a thing is, but that it is of practical value to us in helping us to a unity of self-expression and purpose.

Nor are we shut out from legitimate arguments of another sort. Even materialism would hardly deny that there are relations between the various activities of the universe which are strikingly

analogous to those which in human life imply purpose. There are those, it is true, who would insist that this is due to projection of our own experience into the physical universe and that there are changes but no goal. But the general drift of the evolutionary thought is steadily along the line which makes ever easier interpretation of the universe in terms of spiritual teleology. And in the same proportion as purpose appears in the world are we justified in attributing that purpose to a resident Soul. At the very least the universe is such that it is susceptible to such interpretation as our own experience suggests; and it is axiomatic that the ultimate interpretation of the universe must include those activities which in ourselves we call personal. A universe that contains or — for the sake of argument — has produced thought and feeling and will cannot itself be said to give the lie to a belief in a cosmic Person working within our own external world, not reaching over into our universe and doing things from without.

But materialism is by no means the source of the only opposition to this primary conception of the gospel that the God of Law is the God of Love. Agnosticism is a far more elusive and potent enemy, for it belongs to that dark region in which ignorance

and knowledge so offset each other as to leave the mind in equipoise, or, what is more unfortunate, indifferent. Here, too, the really corrective argument lies in the region of the practical quality of faith. For no man can quite rid himself of that irrepressible faculty. As Bishop Blougram argues:

> "All we have gained by one unbelief
> Is a life of doubt diversified by faith,
> For one of faith diversified by doubt:
> We called the chessboard white, — we call it black.
> . . . . . Belief
> As unbelief before, shakes us by fits,
> Confounds us like its predecessor."

Nothing could be truer, for, even granting that the metaphysical arguments for the existence of God equally balance, — a concession which I am very far from being ready to make — it still follows that a life working under a belief in God is, despite its moments of agonizing doubt, vastly more effective, constructive, peaceful, and healthy, than a life of negation which is tortured by moments of faith.

2. Yet, after all, the question as to the existence of God is one with which the gospel is not primarily concerned. It assumes His existence. It never endeavors to persuade men that He is. It rather would convince them that this God, the very God of the cosmos, is one whose fundamental char-

acter is love, whose closest earthly analogy is parental. He is not Process, He is not God-idea. He is Father.

But if he be a Father, how can there be misery and suffering and all the other brood of evil? It is no less a Christian than Augustine who cries, "What flood of eloquence would ever suffice to portray the tribulations of this life, to describe its wretchedness, which is, as it were, a kind of hell in our present existence?"

(1) A question like this which reaches down into the very depths of existence is not to be answered by a denial of the reality of the very conditions that set the problem. That is as confusing as it is naïve. Since Schopenhauer there have been those who have attempted to cut the Gordian knot of philosophy by regarding the phenominal world as illusion. Such attempts are not always avowedly anti-Christian. In the case of a system like that of Mrs. Eddy, an attempt is made to justify such illusion from the Bible itself. The fundamental premise of the gospel that God is Love is forced to give a conclusion which contradicts the generic experience and convictions of the race. Since God is Love no misery can be a reality. It is the creation of the "mortal mind." If one can down this "mortal

mind" by an insistence upon the thought that God who is All is Love, misery will cease to exist. Therein lies emancipation!

There can be no doubt that psychologically it is possible to produce nervous reaction by the use of such a powerful suggestion as the evangelic view of God. Certain classes of cures wrought by Christian Science are too numerous to be denied. But men still die and earthquakes still ruin cities, and fires still lick up forests. The student of neurology in any case would be slow to admit that the effect produced by a suggestion of necessity guarantees the truth of the suggestion itself. How much less the philosophy from which the suggestion springs! That must be established by comparing it with the other things which we know. Why there should be a mortal mind capable of producing these delusions of evil is just as perplexing as the existence of Satan.

(2) God can be regarded as Father only as He is seen to deliver men from a real world of evil. This deliverance, too, must not be something over against the world of law. In some way it must be correlated with process. Else there are two Gods: the God of nature and the God of grace. So the ancient Gnostics thought, and so must

we think, unless that deliverance from evil which alone can make reasonable the Fatherliness of God is seen to be a part of a cosmic order in which there is room for both suffering and love. That is to say, we must see that deliverance of personalities is the final aim of the very cosmos that makes suffering inevitable.

(3) The only genuinely Christian conception of deliverance from physical evil is that set by Jesus himself, viz. a spiritual life resting on the faith that there are greater values in the universe than those of chemistry and physics. Jesus himself was farthest possible from denying the existence of evil from which God would deliver us. The age was indeed evil and would make his disciples its victims as surely as it made him. He practiced no auto-suggestion in order to make Gethsemane an illusion. The despair of the cross was as real as the cross itself. There is too much at stake in the moral realm to risk training oneself to believe that non-existent the reality of which is witnessed by the totality of human experience. If the universe is not as satisfactory as we should like to have it, it is the only universe we have. To lose the capacity to face its mysteries with level eyes, is too high a price to pay for regaining one's health.

3. The man who is in sympathy with the real science of the day will not ask that the universe be changed in order that he may escape sorrow; or that the nature from which sin springs shall be annihilated in order that he may be holy; or that death, which seems so integral a part of life, shall be abolished in order that he may preserve that individuality which is a man's greatest treasure; or that the forces of social evolution shall be changed in order that there may be established a society that shall be a fraternity. He knows that such demands involve the very structure of the universe in which he lives. The deliverance which he seeks is deliverance in accordance with the world of law, a freedom of soul that is born of spiritual growth and mastery. The modern man in his desire to be saved can only ask God to enable him, by faith and insight and divine assistance, to rise superior to the impersonal elements of the universe, to ally himself redemptively with the onward rush of that universe as it embodies the will of immanent Love.

And he has abundant grounds to welcome the evangelic message of hope as yet unfulfilled. That, in the great process due to the operation of God's will which the ancient world described in terms of eschatology and the modern man expresses in

terms of evolution, there is something more than a blind succession of changes — that is the quintessence of the Christian view of the universe. Sorrow is the shadow of joy. The slow emergence of personality from the husk of nature; the steady growth of the individual as he gains new spiritual rights as over against physical forces; the sure, if sometimes woefully slow, transformation of the social body by the principles which have given worth to the individual; divine discontent with things as they are and persistent effort to make things as they should be; all these elementary facts of social history argue the reasonableness of the faith in the reality of the good God of Jesus. If in view of the darker facts of life a Christian cannot be a thoroughgoing optimist, he has every reason for being a meliorist. He no longer fears the God of Law, for he not only believes that the evils which spring from nature are the inseparable concomitants of a process toward the better that proclaims the Father,—that as there could be no Better without a Worse, so there is no Worse without a Better,—but he also believes that he can himself, as a spiritual person strengthened and inspired by God, rise above the natural order in which change and suffering are implicit, into the freedom of the sons of God; into

an eternal, not a temporal, order of existence; out from the kingdom of Nature into the kingdom of God.

In such an assurance, the modern man finds science an ally. Our physiologists and psychologists are already preaching something of the same gospel. Fear rather than intellectual doubt is the great enemy of humanity in their teaching as truly as in the teaching of Jesus. If faith in God revealed and interpreted by Jesus delivers us from the fear of those forces which seem so heartless, it is only corroboration when our physiological psychologists tell us that fear is a breeder of disease and that cheerfulness is the source of health.

Further, both the gospel and the scientific dissertation alike emphasize the supreme worth of personality. To both alike the significance of a man lies not in what he is but in what he is becoming. Treatises on economics are hardly more than a commentary on the teaching of Jesus that a man can afford to give everything in exchange for his own life. Anthropology and the science of education point unwaveringly to the evolution of the free personality. Civilization might almost be described as society's constant lengthening of the chains which bind spiritual personality so closely to physical nature.

To know the truth is indeed to be free. The very discontent and struggle which the gospel causes; the very difficulties which beset the man who attempts to shape his life on the belief that love rather than force is supreme, are testimonies to the worth of the teaching. For, strange as it seems, such struggles bring peace and health and joy. To trust is to grow strong. To fear is to grow weak. To estimate the outer world as good and yet not the supreme good; to judge personality superior to the forces of nature; to dare lose one's life in order to save one's life, all this is as reasonable as its pursuit is heroic.

> "Resolve to be thyself; and know that he
> Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

is the call of a greater than Matthew Arnold.

III

1. Yet, unless I mistake, it is here that the gospel meets its most intense enemy. There is no middle ground for an earnest man to take. If he has come to distrust the essential gospel of the spiritual life, he must become a neutral, unsympathetic observer of the world, or a pessimist, the terrified slave of physical nature. Nature and life themselves become evils. Von Hartmann, it is true, is not popular in America,

but the pessimism which he rationalized is by no means foreign to our experience. "The future religion," he says in substance, "will be one whose substance is the renunciation of all life in the wholly blank and vague and limitless immensity which knows nothing of itself and which is so aberrant from its fundamental condition as to produce, contrary to its inherent nature, conscious beings who must suffer and wail, and agonize as long as they are conscious." Could words be in more complete contrast to the evangelic proclamation as to the goodness and love of God? Yet, stripped of the peculiar philosophy which lies back of it, the pessimism of von Hartmann and of Schopenhauer before him, is shared by many a soul who looks out upon the catastrophies in nature and the inequalities of our social life; who knows in his own experience the bitterness of sorrow, and who has found in every action results incommensurate with effort.

Omar's distaste for the moral order as well as his sense of the awfulness of the non-moral evils of the world color much of our modern thinking.

> "Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
> To grasp the sorry Scheme of things entire,
> Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
> Remold it nearer to the Heart's Desire?"

Pessimism springs not only from a disbelief in a good God; it springs quite as truly from a disbelief in the spiritual worth of man. The two are inseparable. Whoever distrusts God distrusts man; and whoever distrusts man, unless he be inspired by the faith of the gospel, comes to distrust God. The outcome of such distrust, whether it be of God or of man, may not immediately disclose itself, but if the literature which unblushingly discloses the nakedness of so much of our modern world is any criterion, such results are sure to emerge.

What man of us, looking out into the confused social order which we have inherited and which we strive often so desperately to better does not at times cry out with that poet we once thought might become a prophet:—

> . . . "on, but on does the old earth steer
> As if her port she knew.
> God, dear God! Does she know her port,
> Though she goes so far about?
> Or blind astray, does she make her sport
> To brazen and chance it out?
> I watched when her captains passed:
> She were better captainless.
> Men in the cabins, before the mast,
> But some were reckless and some aghast,
> And some sat gorged at mess."

Sometime or other the most hopeful of us suffer moments of pessimism, and some few, the specific gravity of whose souls has been determined by the exclusion of all the brighter and more hopeful elements furnished by Christian faith, sink to its depths. Suicide itself seems a way to good. "The door stands open!" "Death," says Hauptmann, in the person of Michael Kramer, "is the mildest form of life. The activities of the great world are the shudderings of fever." And who can ever forget the gathering despair of Rosmersholm with the mad rush of the unhappy man and woman to seek death in the mill stream?

2. Nor is the case bettered when the man who has abandoned faith in God passes from pessimism to an alleged superiority to morality. Von Hartmann declares that he freed himself from his *Weltschmerz* — that luxurious sort of pessimism of which Germans alone seem capable — by writing about it. Thereafter he enjoyed the undisturbed serenity of the philosopher who lives in the world of thought, absorbed in observation even of his own pain, and expecting that men would escape from the illusion of hope only in a far distant future. Nietzsche, too, though fundamentally a preacher of what he regards as a better day to dawn when conventional

Christian ethics are replaced by a life wholly subordinate to the Will to Power, refused to admit the truth of either optimism or pessimism. To espouse either he declares would be to make oneself a defender or a critic of the God of the theologians — for which class of thinkers, it hardly needs to be added, Nietzsche has little use.

But how far is such indifference preferable to that despair that can see pain rather than happiness as the outcome of the world-process? Under the atrophying influence of both, many a modern man has lost hope in himself, in his universe, and in his God. An attitude of soul which deadens all idealism is the chief ally of popular materialism. Pessimism has ceased to be an academic speculation and has spread into life. And there the gospel must meet it, conquer it, and replace it by trust in the Father of Jesus. God the Creator can be vindicated when He is seen to be God the Saviour.

IV

It is here we need that aspect of the work of a redeeming God the church has embodied in its doctrine of the atonement. The bearing of Jesus' death upon our assurance of the forgiveness of sin we shall notice later, but that death has here an

equal meaning. It has come down to us across the centuries, not mere dogma, but a formula of courage and of optimism. The victory of this gentle life over the forces of evil and of animal decay was not accomplished from without, but from within. His was the triumph of the spiritual life. Jesus conquered the doubt and distrust and sorrow upon which the pessimist seizes. And if ever a man had justification for pessimism it was he.

It is a bitter thing to be defeated in the conflict for personal advantage. Among the most pitiful sights of life is the man who once succeeded, but who now has failed. To meet such a one whom you have known in former years in all the strength of authority born of position and of wealth, and find him now submerged in the consciousness of defeat, is to enter into one of the tragedies of this strange maelstrom we call civilization. But there is a defeat more bitter than that of the man who has suffered defeat in his struggle for wealth, or fame, or control over human lives. It is the defeat that overtakes a man because he has put self aside and has striven to help others; who has dared believe humanity something better than it turned out to be; and has striven to make men realize their own spiritual possibilities. For such a life to find itself

rejected, misinterpreted, abused, betrayed, condemned as criminal, is to strain faith to the utmost. And Jesus bore all this and more. For in one black moment on the cross he shared also in that despair which those feel who, seeing hope and friends forsake them, think God Himself unfaithful.

The gospel in teaching that God is love not only faces this tragic aspect of life, but it makes it the basis of the boldest hope the human mind has ever reached. There have been men who have thought the God of Law is the God of Love because they were fortunate. But the gospel dares believe God is love because Jesus was defeated. To it the miseries of the Christian life are but the darker side of the true life process. It insists that it is wiser to act on the conviction that love is the divine life and bear the consequent buffetings of outrageous fortune, than to sacrifice that faith to immediate success. The faith of Jesus grows contagious. We also dare make the adventure of such trust in God.

But Jesus is here not merely example and influence. He is revelation. The dead Christ was the risen Christ, set forth by God to faith, in his very blood, as evidence that the God who forgives the sinner is the same God who punishes sin. To the man who believes in Jesus, the God of Law is more

readily seen to be the God of Love. The dead Christ lives. That is the seal of the evangelic conviction that the God of Law is the God of Love; for in his triumph are revealed the possibilities of humanity's triumph as well. That is the truth which the Greek fathers saw so clearly. The self which, simply because it is human, must inherit the miseries born of chemical, physical, and social forces, can also, if only like Jesus it be spiritually at one with the God of things as they are to be, rise with Jesus to the trust and courage and freedom which are the inheritance of the sons of God. Who can separate His sons from the love of God? They have, with Jesus, found their true life where Nature, red of tooth and claw, can never reach them.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Sin proposes a metaphysical problem of no small difficulty. Approach it as one may it refuses to divulge its real nature or quite to explain its existence in a God-ruled universe. None the less, sin, like its fellow-mystery, life, is no stranger to the modern man. A sense of its terrible power is another prompting to that cry for help which is the heart of all healthy religion. To minimize sin is to give the lie to the most ordinary experience of life. We do not need to define it in order to recognize it; we do not need to know its origin in order to pray for deliverance from its power.

I

1. Sin to Jesus was a terrible reality, not a mere negation. He had no quarrel with ceremonials. He came not to destroy the law, and with true constructive spirit he cautioned his followers from a revolutionary break with their national religion. But he was a deadly enemy of that tendency only

too common among Pharisaical teachers of all ages to narrow sin to illegality. From the point of view of the Pharisees Jesus was hopeless. He shattered by word and precept all that carefully developed exposition of statutory righteousness which was the glory of the schools. His violation of the Sabbath regulations of the rabbis was constant and open. He scorned that minute conscientiousness which could tithe the mint and annis and cummin and make ceremonial hand-washing before meals a matter of supreme religious importance. He rejected fasting as an offset for wrongdoing. Instead of the excessive religiosity and minute punctiliousness of formal ethics he emphasized those states and acts which the morality of Pharisaism did not deny but neglected. He laid down as a fundamental principle that it is the life which acts and the life which is bad or good. Text-books of morality have time and again listed deeds which are wrong in themselves. Jesus goes deeper. With him righteousness is not statutory but hygienic. A man may become so thoroughly degenerate as to be morally hopeless; he may get into the grip of an eternal sin and reach the place where he mistakes God's acts for those of Satan, goodness for badness. For a personality so degenerate forgiveness is impossible.

Any attempt at definition which seeks to present Jesus' thought of sin falls short of what we instinctively feel is his real estimate. One might as well try to define life and death. If we say that his idea of sin is that of conduct not controlled by love, we are not far from the truth, for sin with Jesus is essentially anti-social; but such a formula seems too atomistic and ineffective compared with his own vital analysis. We might say that he teaches that sin is a quality of the soul which leads to acts which benefit oneself at the cost of somebody else; that also is true, but it stirs a response which is hardly more self-condemnatory than that roused by the words of Epictetus. We might say that sin with Jesus is that state of the soul which expresses itself in acts which are injurious to personality, his or another's, and indicate that a man is unlike and hostile to a fatherly God. And here in the religious field we come closest to Jesus' thought. Out from such a soul there stream individual and social ill — impurity and selfishness, anger and revenge, insincerity and pride. These are no abstract qualities. Each one of them is the expression of perverted life. Any one of them sets a man against not only his fellows but against his God. They all deny that the Spiritual Life whose center is Love is the supreme force in the universe. Therefore it was not

merely because a man caused suffering to others that Jesus so passionately warned men against that which the moral sentiment abhors. With him sin not only resulted in injury to others; by its very nature it put the man himself out of sympathy with, nay in opposition to, God. And this opposition, like all anarchy and rebellion, he knew must bring suffering.

2. Paul expresses this thought more elaborately. He sees in a man two warring forces, the spirit and the flesh — the inner man and the outer man. By this he does not mean to oppose a man's body to his soul, for Paul never would have insisted that the bodily impulses were wrong in themselves. He did not agree with those philosophers of his day who believed that matter was inherently bad. What he really means by flesh is those impulses which we share with the beasts. In themselves they are neither good nor bad. They constantly prompt to action, but it is only as they are made supreme or as they are misused that they become sinful. All of them the Christian ought to make thoroughly secondary and to use legitimately. Sensuality, the desire to succeed at the cost of other people, quarrelsomeness, perverted religious instincts — all these are bad, because they are the persuasions of animal impulses and are contrary to and tend to enslave a

man's spiritual nature and make him less like God. That, according to Paul, is exactly the situation of the unforgiven man. He has yielded to the backward pull. The spirit which is in the image of God, in that it can love and sacrifice and hope and believe and serve, has prostituted itself to the lower self, which hates and lusts and lies and fights like the beasts. Personality itself is injured. And such subjection, unless it be broken, culminates in the experience of what was to Paul the summary of terror, "the wrath of God."

3. The modern man with a belief in evolution that is something more than purposeless genetic change cannot do better than to close with this conception of sin. For sin, in that it leads to unlikeness with the God of Love, emerges clearly enough in the struggle of a lower self to get control of the spiritual personality which would be loving like God. It is the backward pull that makes Godlikeness so difficult. The watchword of the lower self is life at the expense of others; the watchword of the higher self is life in service for others. The struggle between those two lives is the meaning of the contrast between the two Ages, and is concretely expressed in that experience of Jesus known as the Temptation. Cast in the form of dramatic dialogue it is really an exposition of

that typical moral struggle which, present in every man, reached its highest expression in Jesus. He alone among all men perfectly represented the Spiritual Life, but like every other man he felt the struggle of that lower self which comes over from the centuries of development, and would check the growth of that higher self which is farthest from the animal and nearest to God. There was no harm in being hungry, but when hunger would direct messianic power it was temptation. There was no sin in seeking to win a world; it became temptation to sin only when selfish ambition made messianic power its subject. There was no sin in that faith which could trust God to bear one up if one leaped from the roof of the portico; it was temptation to sin only when an irrational faith would tempt divine love.

Temptation comes, as we have said, when an imperfect good of the past surviving in oneself would set up ideals for a growing spiritual life. In their origin such survivals may be neither good nor evil. In a true sense they lie outside the moral sphere. Sin appears only when personality is violated or prostituted to the service of that which is less personal or impersonal. Only as they serve to subject better, that is, the more Godlike elements of man's being, are physical impulses an occasion of sin. By making

such survivals paramount man transforms this non-moral tendency into sin just as he makes originally harmless germs pathogenic. He perverts personality itself by destroying the perspective of its values.

Those impulses, complete obedience to which is sinfulness, and a voluntary action in accordance with which as supreme is a sin, will be found to be expressions of the two great elements of life — the impulse to perpetuate itself in descendants and the impulse to preserve itself from destruction. True, in such elemental impulses lies in no small way the explanation of the progress through which life on this globe has passed. As we look back over the past we cannot regret the existence of the impulses to propagate and to preserve life. Without the first, living beings would have long since perished from the earth. Without the second, some weak organism or some social institution ill adapted to progress might have determined the course of evolution. But out from the first impulse, if only it be made supreme in a man, springs sensuality with its attendant vices; and out from the second, if it be treated as supreme, springs human selfishness and that mad competition which results not in the survival of the spiritually fittest, but in the pitiless victory of the strongest. To make

either of these two exclusively vital impulses dominant in conduct is to reduce life to the standard of the animal. To make any of their more primitive social expressions dominant is to revert to savagery. A sin as distinct from sin may be described as voluntary action opposed to the divine purpose as seen in the steady progress of life up from the vegetable into the animal and so out into the social and ever more personal realm. Its content is selfishness. To commit it is to set oneself against a cosmic God. The grosser sins are, of course, evidently cases of voluntary reversions to lower types. A man who is a hypocrite is voluntarily following the instinct to deceive others in the interest of benefiting himself, and is exalting an impulse which, however necessary for the animal, is utterly out of place in a man who must live with his fellows. Nor are other illustrations hard to find. Is not the thief reproducing in himself qualities of the animal who prowls by night? Is not the man who sinks his individual responsibility for wrongdoing in corporations like a wolf that runs with the pack? Did not Paul rightly characterize the desire of the Corinthian Christians to quarrel and form rival theological parties as "carnal"?

The more refined sin becomes the greater may be its danger. The world abounds in thieves, liars, and

adulterers, but it is not clear that they are the worst sort of sinners. As civilization develops sin grows corporate. We sin socially by violating social rather than individualistic personal relations. Individually a sinner may be kindly and pure and honest. There is many a theater manager growing rich by pandering to sexual excitement who is a faithful husband. There is many a gambler who is never charged with cheating. There are many directors and stockholders of corporations who are exemplary in their individual relations, but who in their corporate capacity do not hesitate to connive at efforts to bribe legislatures, adulterate foods, unscrupulously crush out competitors, destroy family life by subsidizing saloons, corrupt public opinion by distorting news, induce unsuspecting investors to buy worthless stock, crush out the lives of children in factories, and underpay women employees in their stores. Such men — and some women — are tempted to protect themselves by retreating behind the theory that such matters belong to the realm of business rather than to that of ethics. But they cannot thereby escape. The God who is working in human society will not be deceived by charters, or bought off by dividends.

4. Here we face three alarming facts: Whatever

theory as to the origin of sin we may accept, the great fact cannot be overlooked that, just because as human beings we are a mass of recapitulated impulses and social habits, we advance with effort, we degenerate with ease. Here we face not a mere aggregation of sinful acts, but a common tendency innate in our very humanity, the "original" sin of the Latin fathers. As far back as we can trace it — and Paul acutely traced it to Adam — we find this ease of reversion generically in the race. Nay, it increases as habits grow socialized. We may call it bias, we may split metaphysical hairs as to our responsibility for it, but the fact remains. We may endeavor to gloss it over by some contradictions between determinism and free-will; we may cry out against it most bitterly; but the fact of inherited tendencies that make easy the reversion to a lower type both in individual and society refutes all our denials. Sin is thus more than individual wrongdoing. It involves that progress in the social person of which we now make so much. Once slavery was progress. Now it is sinful. Once concubinage was legal. Now, in Christian states, it is illegal. To revert to either — or many another practice justified by a distant or even a recent past — would be a sin. Yet who but realizes that such an act would be easier than to live absolutely

according to modern law — to say nothing about conforming to the supreme ideals of Jesus?

A second fact is here evident. Society itself has to no small extent become a minister of sin. Personal wrongdoing lives on in its social results, institutional or otherwise. Lives subject to the reversionary influence find themselves from childhood in touch with a social mind that suggests imitation of its evil as well as of its better elements. With our knowledge of the self and of society we see that Augustine and Pelagius were both right. The backward pull is in our nature, and social relations incite us to an imitation of its expression in society. Individual and society alike must be regenerate if sin is to be removed from ourselves and our world.

The third fact is even more serious. Despite all warnings as to results, the supremacy of the lower self brings a certain sort of pleasure. That is one reason why sin is so attractive. A man does not steal because he feels that it is wicked to steal, but because he gets hold of property. A man does not lie because he thinks it is wicked to lie, but because by lying he in some way gets an advantage over some one else. A man does not get drunk because he knows it is wrong to drink, but because of the satisfaction he has in an orgy. Men do not organize the

white slave traffic in order to bring misery upon innocent, credulous girls, but because there is a livelihood in supplying vicious wants. Men and corporations do not break laws because they like lawlessness, but because there are material advantages in lawlessness. Sin is so deeply intrenched in our social life as to be all but ineradicable. And yet we can be saved from it.

II

1. The first step in the gospel's method of saving men from sin is to arouse them to the danger of yielding to this powerful tendency. Our modern life needs a call to moral discontent. We are suffering from indifference to everything except creature comforts. We are too complacent, too ready to think that we are good because we are prosperous. We may not be as conceited as the Pharisee, but most of us cannot understand the humility of the publican. Much of the appeal made to-day in the more progressive pulpits overlooks the fact that multitudes of people are bad. God is a Father, we are told, and men should come to him because he is loving. That is true; but no religion has ever long gripped humanity that has deceived itself into believing that men are better than they are. Even the Christian Scientist has his "mortal mind." It is no safer to trifle with

disease of the soul than with disease of the body, but it is hard to make men believe that they really need a spiritual physician. They would rather be amused.

The great difficulty confronting the attempt to reduce Christianity to a mere philosophy of values lies in the fact that every such attempt is liable to presuppose an awakened Christian experience. In the long run the test of any religion will be its capacity to arouse repentance and religious consecration. It is one thing for a theology to nurture a life already Christian; it it is quite another to beget that Christian life. A church must be something more than a theological orphanage. It must have its own spiritual children. It is a sense of the reality of sin that alone can make of the gospel anything more than a graduate lecture course in Christian ethics. A religious message that cannot stir sinners to repentance is not the gospel of the New Testament.

That is not to say that a man must wait until he is very wicked before he comes to God. It is not to say that the pulpit should imitate Jonathan Edwards and preach on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." It is not to say that children who have grown up under the beneficent influence of Christian families should be forced to confess a guilt of which they are not conscious. It is still farther from saying that

we should not so educate our children that as they grow in stature they shall also grow in moral sensitiveness and in favor with God. But it is to say that we can no more overlook the fact of sin than we can overlook the fact of tuberculosis. Whether those whom we would bring to God are children or adults the gospel should come as a message of salvation. But you cannot get people, young or old, to want to be saved unless they are convinced that there is something to be saved from.

Now it is no more pleasurable to-day to convince persons of the truth of a moral diagnosis than it was to convince their fathers. Prophets have always found that their physical comfort decreased in proportion as they increased their hearers' moral discomfort. In many cases wrongdoing seems to guarantee prosperity. The Psalmist had his faith shaken by this fact long ago. He saw the wicked prosperous and possessing the good things of life, while the righteous seemed to be exceedingly unfortunate. He found his faith, as he said, ready to stagger. His disquietude has persisted. Why do good men fail in business while unscrupulous promoters grow rich? Why do bad men so enjoy themselves?

Yet, just because of these stumblingblocks, men must be made to see the danger of this reversal

of values. The mere fact of pleasure in sin must be shown to be an evidence of moral disease just as excessive appetite is an evidence of dyspepsia. Men and children alike must be made to feel that to yield to unworthy impulses, despite the ease and the pleasure of such yielding, is dangerous and a guarantee of suffering as truly as disease is a guarantee of suffering.

2. Sin, as Jesus and Paul and the prophets taught, is evidently something more than wrongdoing. It is a violation of the will of God. It is an attack upon the God of the universe. That can mean no other outcome than suffering. Sin comes in when men refuse to go on with a self-revealing God and seek to make any stage of that process-revelation final. They oppose the God who wills that the universe and humanity shall *become*, not merely *be*.

Some sins do not involve an appreciable injury to others. The spirit of rebellion against God, the hatred of goodness, blasphemy and pride, may not directly result in wrongdoing to our fellow men, but they are sins nevertheless, for they are a revolt against God's will as seen both in Jesus and in the nature of things. There could be wrongdoing if there were no God in the universe, and it would cause suffering; but it is hard to see how we could then

believe that suffering would necessarily extend to the wrongdoer himself. But for the man who believes in God there is no such uncertainty. A man may evade the laws made by legislatures, but he can no more evade the will of God in the realm of morals than he can deceive the law of gravitation. The same immanent Spirit that makes it certain that a man who jumps off a cliff will be dashed to pieces makes it just as certain that the soul that sins shall suffer. We may wish that God was more good-natured; we may even sometimes succeed in persuading ourselves that He is; but such flaccid optimism no more affects the nature of things than it affects the laws of climate or of chemical combinations. A terrible God is this God of Love, immanent in social process.

3. But how are men to be convinced that such future suffering is sure? Is not God good? Will the Father punish His children for their mistakes and their yielding to temptation?

There are two replies that can be made to this question. In the first place we know something of how a loving God works. The man who cuts off his arm never sees it grow again. The child who plays with fire is burned. Shall God be any less a God of Law in the moral world? The God who has so made

humanity that the drunkard has delirium tremens is the same God who speaks through the lawgiver and the prophet and Christ, warning men of the outcome of sin in their spiritual selves. One can even see His punitive will in the inevitableness of suffering from sin in ordinary experience. Dishonesty for a time seems to be advantageous, but sooner or later the God of Law makes the wrath of men to praise him, and the thief, be he ever so respectable in his thieving, pays the penalty of his crime. The past few years, with their record of bankruptcy and suicide, have shown that God is still in history and that men cannot trifle with the eternal laws of righteousness.

So long as the God of process has not abdicated, we must believe, also, that death transforms sin into suffering. The terrible pictures of the Judgment Day and hell have reality back of them. The loss of the body in itself is as truly punishment for those who have "lived to the flesh" as would be the loss of a hand to a pianist. All that we know of human nature argues that death makes a man neither better nor worse; it simply introduces a new mode of existence. And that new existence will be full of joy or misery according to the readiness of the soul to live in it. A man thrown into mid-ocean drowns. A bad man in the spiritual world will be in misery.

It cannot be otherwise. God is not mocked. What a man sows he reaps.

In the second place the gospel would insist that there is only one unforgivable sin; the living as if love were not supreme. Such a living, as Jesus warned the Pharisees, makes men see God only as Satan; refuses to forgive enemies; fights and maligns the representatives of love. That is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

To describe God as love is to herald the inevitable defeat of every man who is not loving. For it is *God* who is love. And can a man win against God? Obscurant definitions here will not avail. If the process in which we are involved is dominated by love, then he who is not loving must bear the brunt of the process itself.

It is sometimes said that modern thought is removing the punitive God from His universe. It seems to me, on the contrary, that it is bringing that God into the universe and even more into human life. The God that the scientific investigator compels us to accept is more a God to be feared than even the Jehovah of the prophets. To be sure, for the eye of faith there is love in the universe, but it is no wonder that men who look simply at the darker side of the reign of law grow pessimistic. It is a fearful thing for

an unloving man to fall into the hands of a loving God. That sounds like a paradox, but it is more: it is a reading of the universe.

4. The man who is not susceptible to fear can respond to the gospel's appeal to his shame. Whose conscience does not condemn him as he faces the Master? However unsatisfactory may be some forms at least of the so-called moral influence of the atonement, no man can deny the appeal which the suffering Christ makes to the morally sensitive soul. Recall Bernard and Francis. The picture of a Christ who, although he had done no evil, found himself the victim of sin is a perennial challenge to the man who would belittle the significance of sin. For he can see that the motives which led the authorities of Judea to take so pure and noble a life as Jesus' were not peculiar to Judea. They are as old and as new as humanity itself. Bad men hate loving men.

Nor are these the only appeals of Jesus. He stirs humanity. Children as well as men find their moral sense quickened in the presence of a hero and a martyr. And such a response of the spiritual self is the source of moral convalescence in the same proportion as it springs from even an unformulated recognition of the worth of the principles for which the hero or martyr stood. Perhaps the most quickening appeal

that the gospel can make to the modern man — and to the modern adolescent — with his conventional morality, is the Christ who bore testimony to the dangers of sin by preferring the dangers of righteousness. Even if he were an unhistorical picture he would still have its power to stir the depths of the moral life. How much mightier will he be as he is seen to be more than allegory or symbol!

III

1. This deliverance from sin and its consequences promised by the gospel does not presuppose that a man shall be immediately morally perfect. Deliverance consists in evoking a Godlike spiritual life in a sinful man. That is the difficult paradox for every man who has rightly read his own nature, and which to the Jewish Christian seemed dangerously near the violation of the fundamental law of God Himself. The faith of the early Jewish Christians who made such trouble for Paul among the early churches of Galatia is entirely intelligible. They believed that Jesus was the Christ and that such faith would carry them into the messianic kingdom which he was to establish, saved from death and from the condemnation of the Judgment Day. But they believed that such blessing was possible only for those who were Jews,

and therefore they endeavored both scrupulously and unscrupulously to induce Gentile Christians to perform the works of the law. True, after the Apostolic conference at Jerusalem they were ready to reduce the demands for ritual observance to a minimum, but there still lay in the heart of the Judaistic Christian the belief that if one were to gain the blessing promised to Abraham he must be a member of the Jewish community.

Over against this was the insistence of Paul upon justification, or, as it might be more accurately called, acquittal through faith. Paul's acute mind rejected any conception of deliverance from sin that involved the counting of atomistic deeds and the striking of a balance. Human nature itself was infected. Faith in Jesus involved a voluntary attitude toward God the reverse of that which is exhibited in following the tendency away from God. Paul saw only too well that the tendency to make "flesh" supreme which lay in man's nature in itself exposed a man to the penalty of a broken law. It could make no difference whether his violations were many or few. The man who violated the law at a single point had actually broken the law and was liable to punishment. He was not responsible for the tendency, but unaided by God he would yield to its power. However theoreti-

cally he might be able to keep the law of God and his own conscience, practically he was guilty. God must pardon if he were to be saved from punishment.

2. So simple and consistent a scheme is entirely intelligible to the modern man, but he cannot help querying what there is in it for his own moral and religious life. His fundamental conception of the universe makes it difficult for him to respond to the forensic conception of God as a monarch who establishes days of trial and passes individual sentences upon millions of lives. His idea of law makes it hard for him to think of a remitted penalty in a moral world, where relations are genetic and only figuratively to be conceived of in terms of the law court and a king. Moral questions, like all other problems of the universe, can be thought of literally by the modern man only in the terms of law, of organism, and environment.

Has, then, this aspect of the gospel no meaning for him? And is it, precisely understood, no part of the modern preacher's message? We cannot so believe. An evil act certainly implies an evil nature, and the results described as Judgment Day and penalty are among the fundamental facts of the modern man. As his equivalent of the judgment he has the postponed effects of the working of the causes in the moral world; and of the penalty, the suffering of the degenerate.

Nor is this all. The modern man can accept sincerely the great truth taught by Jesus and his disciples that God must be the Saviour if the man is to be saved. In the face of to-day's psychology and sociology who would dare say the unaided individual is ever able to prevent the outworkings of the forces of evil? Every life has its unearned increment of character born of its social situation. It would have been better or worse had it not been swept on by its environments. The very insistence of the New Testament upon the divine element in salvation makes it the easier for the modern man to welcome and to understand. The past is irrevocable except as its consequences are overcome by the very powers that are making a different future.

But if this irrevocableness is due to the working of the immanent God, then God must save us. And He must save us by enabling us to counterbalance the awful tendency to sinful living that brings suffering. The spiritual life must be made triumphant by the Spirit of God.

Have we confidence to believe that each of us can share in regenerating love? Love we believe is at the heart of things, but the love revealed by philosophy and science is a heartless, relentless process-love that saves the race by crushing the individual who refuses

to conform to its ongoing. Most men want to be saved themselves. Who can give us the assurance that divine love can save the individual man or woman, and who can show us the sort of life implied by such a salvation?

The reply comes from the gospel: Jesus. In him is to be seen the redemptive life of God. In him was the spiritual life that triumphs over temptation and the natural order. Knowing him and his teaching we know how to harmonize our life with the regenerating life of God. We simply have to live like our Master. So to live is to come under the saving power of God. It is to establish a personal situation which in itself is dynamic, and the result of which, so far as the individual is concerned, must mean progress toward likeness with the God who is one element of the situation. For in friendship personality always transforms personality. The fact that such a divinely regenerate life will be ultimately victorious over passion and sin and death, is to-day's equivalent of that removal of guilt which Paul described as justification. The loving God of the universe will save a man who tries to live like Jesus. Of this we are sure. For such a man will have the spiritual life, the "mind" of Jesus.

IV

But the experience of forgiveness and his certainty of acquittal at the coming Judgment Day left in Paul's mind the question: Is it just that one who is morally imperfect should escape the consequences of his sin? In such a case is not the moral order threatened?

This question, springing as it does from the keen realization of guilt which so marked the Hebrew religion, was never raised by Jesus. He simply argued that God's fatherliness could be trusted to welcome the prodigal just as implicitly as a human father could be trusted to give good gifts to his children. But such an answer did not and will not satisfy minds that seek to systematize such forgiveness with their world-view. The question of Paul was inevitable.

It is to be noticed, however, that Christian experience is here the point of departure. Paul did not believe in the forgiveness of sin because he believed in an atonement; he believed in an atonement because he had experienced that which implies that his sin was forgiven. Because of the gift of the Spirit he never doubted that God and he were actually reconciled and that punishment was no longer to be feared by him. The further ques-

tion concerned not himself but the moral sovereignty of God. He found his answer suggested in the very presuppositions of the world-view which suggested the question as to the moral order. The sovereign God wanted to forgive and had forgiven those who had accepted Jesus as Christ. He had, however, preserved the integrity of His law and of His sovereignty in this act of grace, by setting forth Jesus himself in his blood as the propitiatory gift which sealed reconciliation. From a little different angle Jesus was also conceived of by Paul as a king who died vicariously for his followers — an analogy doubtless suggested by the not infrequent punishment of a rebellious king by the Romans as an offset for the exhibition of certain clemency to his rebellious subjects. Jesus had borne death, the punishment of sin, although he himself had not sinned. God's sovereignty was therefore vindicated and He was free to acquit those whom He would.

The New Testament writers no more than Paul ever elaborated systematically this atoning work of Christ. They make it real to the believer by the use of figures. But all of them — sacrifice, redemption, purchase — clearly enough possess the same significance; the death of the Christ was a neces-

sary, an integral part of his very vocation as deliverer. He died in behalf of sinners. Not, it is true, in the sense that God had to be placated or appeased. Without exception, the apostles held that God Himself originated the plan of salvation. The sacrificial aspect of the death of the Christ was derived from a belief as to what the death of the lamb did for the man who sought reconciliation with God at the altar. It brought the final assurance of such reconciliation and removal of guilt. Christ was the Christian's passover, and his death was interpreted figuratively as the seal of the believers' assurance of reconciliation. Viewed as a ransom or purchase, the death of Christ was never in the New Testament treated as an actual payment to Satan or to God, but rather as the cost of his messianic work. He could not save without dying; for death was the penalty of sin from which men were to be saved, and the revelation of the possibility of such deliverance could be made only by an actual and typical example of such deliverance. In a truer sense than men have sometimes seen, the Christ bore the sin of the world; for as part of a world in which sin was socialized he bore to the full its outcome of hate and violence and death.

V

1. It was inevitable that this dogmatically undeveloped estimate of the death of Christ should have ceased to satisfy the minds of those who endeavored to set forth their Christianity as a philosophical system. Yet, somewhat strangely, the doctrine of the atonement was among the last of the doctrines to be systematically developed. Christianity conquered the Roman world without possessing any authoritative doctrine of the atonement. Indeed, the Greek, as contrasted with the Latin Fathers, with the Roman sense of law and its punishment, always found in the death of Jesus an element in their characteristic doctrine of salvation, viz. that in Jesus humanity was brought to immortality rather than to forensic guiltlessness. For hundreds of years the figures of the ransom were conceived of literally and Jesus was believed to have given himself a ransom to Satan in return for the release of the saints in Sheol. Such a conception rests upon the assumption that Satan had a claim on man which God Himself had to recognize; and this is definitely stated by some of the greatest of the church fathers. Indeed, so far was this conception pushed that deliverance was believed to have been accomplished by deceit, according to such

fathers as Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Leo, and Gregory I. According to the latter the humanity of Jesus was a bait offered by God to the devil, who snapped at it and was left hanging on the invisible hook, Christ's divinity. Such a plan of salvation was frankly called by one of its champions, the great Ambrose, a "pious fraud."

Such a grotesque theory of the atonement, although natural for the man who interprets certain figures of the New Testament literally, was obviously to be held only at the expense of a belief in a moral God. Yet it was difficult to eradicate it from the thought of men. Even to the present day it will occasionally be met. But from the time of Origen it was supplemented by the conception of sacrifice, the outgrowth of social experience. Christ's flesh, according to many of the early writers, was an actual sacrifice offered to God. As early as the fourth century we find the idea that such a sacrificial death of God was the only means by which the death decreed by Him could be vanquished and thus harmony be brought between Him and His love.

This conception of the death of Christ as sacrifice, though undeveloped as long as sacrifice was an existing social institution, was given a new turn in

the West by the growing secondary Christianity of the Latin church. The conception of merit through penance was extended to the work of Christ. From the days of Tertullian Latin Christianity increasingly believed that God needed to be propitiated through suffering, and there grew up inevitably the quantitative conception of such suffering. If there was more suffering than there was guilt, or if a man did more than his prescribed duty, he would lay up merit. Thus there developed the theory that, as Jesus was sinless, his sufferings and death possessed merits which could be transferred through the church to the elect. This conception, which still survives in the Christian creeds, was supplemented by Anselm with the German conception of composition (*Wehrgeld*) and the idea of honor permeating the age of chivalry. An injury to another was of two parts; that to the person or estate, and that to the "honor" or "dignity." It could be requited by the *lex talionis*, or the injured party's honor could be satisfied by the punishment or the submission of the wrongdoer, or by the payment of a sum of money. Every injury was thus easily translated into a debt varying with the "honor" of the person injured. In the case of God, humanity owed him absolute obedience, but since men had

sinned they owed him reparation. As God is infinite the injury and consequently the debt to his honor were infinite. Obviously mankind being finite could not make the *amende honorable* to the injured deity and would have been hopelessly lost had not God become man and made infinite satisfaction in the person of the God-man Jesus. This belief, born of social practice, expressed by Anselm in his famous treatise "*Cur Deus Homo*," was the first attempt to utilize the death of Jesus in really systematic fashion. The "satisfaction" of the infinite debt owed by man to God whose infinite honor he had injured could be paid only by God who became man. The suffering of the human nature of Christ was magnified to infinity by his divine nature, and thus the way was open for God, with honor satisfied, to forgive those elect who had faith and works.

2. It is unnecessary to trace further the theories of an objective atonement by the Christ. They are all modifications of ransom, sacrifice, or satisfaction. Not always as distinct as these original types, they have seldom advanced far beyond them. Whether God's justice or His law needed vindication makes small difference. All theories as to the atonement implicitly or explicitly imply that the

moral unity of God is threatened by His forgiveness of sins. He is in danger of losing either His reputation as the God of Law, or His right to forgive. And it is to avert this threatened schism in the divine character that the death of the Christ has been set forth in accordance with the prevailing concepts of various ages.

It has followed that no theory has been universally acceptable to the church. The social ideals on which each has been built have themselves been outgrown. Each has seemed to its critics to justify God at the expense of violating some fundamental ethical conviction of the Christian born of a higher social morality. And thus it has come to pass that throughout the history of the church there has been no view of the atonement so acceptable as that undeveloped statement of the fact so variously expressed in the New Testament, — that the death of Christ was an integral part and necessary outcome of his work of salvation. The varieties in the doctrines have never been unified by any ecumenical council and there is thus no orthodox theory of the atonement on an equality with that of the person of Christ. Throughout Christendom each body of Christians, nay, I had almost said, each individual Christian, has his own view of this central

truth of the gospel. There are those who believe that Christ bore the quantitative equivalent of all the punishments due to all the sins of all mankind; others who hold that as the universal man he actually bore the punishment due humanity; others who hold that God was graciously pleased to reckon the sufferings of Christ as rendering satisfaction for His law broken by mankind; others who believe that by union with Christ the believer shares in his death and thus in the punishment borne by him; others, that as a substitute for the believer he bore suffering which in their case would have been punishment; others, that by his death he expiated the sins of mankind and appeased an angry God; others, that Christ offered in behalf of the race a universal and representative repentance which literally broke his heart so that he died of it. And the list might be extended indefinitely.

Yet at one point the Christian consciousness of the ages has been at one. The death of Jesus was not that of a mere martyr. In some way the Western world has found in it a release from its sense of guilt. The moral influence theory of the atonement represents a great truth, for his death was certainly calculated to move men to an appreciation of the love of God. But such a view is only par-

tially satisfactory. Beyond the influence of the death upon mankind there is, as the apostles and the church have insisted, that which is a revelation of the divine economy which brings intellectual as well as religious peace. The modern man can think of this economy in terms of transfer of penalty only by abandoning his fundamental conception of the relation of God to His world, but he cannot overlook the inference that if Christ be all the Christian community feels he must have been, his death has a deeper significance than that of the moral influence of martyrdom. It is a revelation of God's purpose and character. Its worth is Christ's worth.

VI

But how shall the modern man express this conviction in terms intelligible to himself? The transfer of penalty, sacrifice, and propitiation in the original sense of the terms, the satisfaction of the divine honor, the vindication of God's sovereign law — all these formulas, however helpful to their authors and in greater or less degrees to the church of to-day either spring from philosophies, rites, and political theories, which are meaningless to him, or fail to express his own sense of the nature of the

cosmic God. If he is to grasp the meaning of the forgiveness of sin in any sense like that of the gospel, he must place the death of Christ among those elements of his world-view that are the equivalent of those in which Paul expressed his own sense of its significance as a means of justifying his faith in God. It must be discovered by being correlated with the immanence of God, the divinely directed process of which human history is one phase, and social solidarity.

True, he may say he has no need of such a formulation, that his faith in God requires no recourse to the death of Jesus for vindication. But none the less in the long run he will face the need, and then just as he has found courage and hope in the example of his Master will he find new help and faith in a proper estimate of his death.

Nor is such an estimate impossible. Disregarding all questions as to what figures can best express our instinctive recognition of this deeper and, one is tempted to say, cosmic significance of Jesus' death, it is possible for a mind controlled by the presuppositions of the modern world to see in it certain literal truths of elemental importance.

1. In the first place it exhibits Jesus' faith in the justice of God's moral order.

(1) Jesus accepted as just the suffering involved in the social effects of sin.

There is nothing in life more perplexing or maddening than to see a man reaping the results of other men's wrongdoing, yet, by the laws of heredity and by the laws governing the socialization of influence, nothing is more common. The sins of the fathers are visited unto the third and fourth generations and the misery born of violation of the constructive forces of society extend through war and poverty and a thousand other media to uncounted millions. To this great law Jesus became uncomplainingly subject. He must have regarded it as at least just, as a part of the divine law.

(2) By his death Jesus also recognized as just that other fact so desperately hard to understand, that service rendered by love to the higher needs of the world is at the expense of suffering caused by the sin of others.

Vicarious suffering, through sympathy or body, seems to be demanded from love in every phase of human existence from birth to death. Just why this should be true in the case of sin we are unable to say. We only know that it is involved in that struggle by which the good man overcomes the force of his own and society's lower past. But just

because it does lie inextricably involved in the social solidarity of human life we want to realize its justice. Otherwise human history grows diabolical. If the effects of sin were to be limited to those who commit it, the problem would in a measure disappear, for humanity as a whole recognizes the justice of punishment on the part of those who do wrong. But why should the innocent suffer? The question is a part of that larger question as to whether the God of Law is a God of Love, but with this difference: it involves our recoil from the innocent man's suffering the consequences of another's sin. Here again Jesus helps us with life rather than philosophy. If he had judged such a fact to be wrong we might have expected some protest from his lips, but he submitted to the fact as a part of the great world in which he was involved. Desiring to love and serve men he suffered that which such effort brought from the hatred of those whom he would help. And by his faith we are inspired to similar faith.

2. In the second place the sufferings of Jesus exhibit his faith in the love of God.

(1) The attitude of Jesus toward these two laws of social evolution was not that of desperate submission. On the contrary, he accepted them as

the will of a loving Father. He trusted the goodness of the immanent God who had so organized humanity by His very presence that sin, by involving the innocent as well as the guilty in its consequences, should be shown exceeding sinful. Such an attitude of mind is the complement of that love which would save humanity. But it is, if possible, something even more heroic and wonderful. It is one thing, like the condemned nobles of the Reign of Terror, to help a fellow creature doomed to one's own fate; it is quite another to believe that the judge who pronounces the common sentence is not only just but loving. The faith of Jesus was far enough from stoicism. In undergoing his suffering and death Jesus exhibited no mere speculative confidence in impersonal law. A submission to the physical world by no means excludes rebellion at suffering in a moral sphere. The situation in which Jesus found himself demands faith rather than logic. He saw no Reign of Terror in God's kingdom. He drew trust in love from his own sense of divine sonship. It was because of his inner experience of God as Father that he drank the cup in Gethsemane.

(2) But self-devotion to an ideal and trust in a loving God are not all that can be seen in the vicari-

ous suffering of Jesus. The question still remains whether he was not after all another in the long line of victims, and the consequent fear lest the life of love which he chose as the only possible expression of his sense of God's presence is really weaker than the life of hatred that hung him on the cross. At this point we pass from the faith of Jesus to the objective facts of his history.

True, such a question can in part be answered by the response which our best selves make to anything that is fine and heroic. The very uprising of the progressively realized spiritual life within us leads us instinctively to feel that it is better to follow an ideal to the cross than to retreat with creature comfort to the Governor's palace. In part, too, it can be answered by the service which the Christian community has been inspired by his self-devotion to render to society. But even thus we are not quite content. The modern man, as we have already seen, is sorely tempted to doubt even such judgments of ultimate value. And here the historical Jesus does indeed help us to freedom. The gospel breeds new confidence in the supremacy of the spiritual life even though it submits to vicarious suffering by presenting the risen Jesus. He is no longer a dead Christ; he is the risen Christ who

died. His resurrection is not set forth by the apostles as an unrelated wonder. It is to them the dramatic exposition of the fact that though he suffer the worst sin can inflict, a man is not thereby necessarily defeated. If only his spiritual life is in right relations with God he is forgiven and triumphant over death itself.

For what is the forgiveness of sins? Juristically considered it is the remission of penalty due not only to individual sins but to human nature itself. But what is remission of penalty from the point of view of the presuppositions of modern thinking? It must be something more than the mere abrogation of punishment attached to the breaking of statutes. Punishment in the moral sphere is not external to the wrongdoer. We have passed the stage of a forensic theology. The forgiveness of sins means that in the personal sphere wrongdoing can be prevented from resulting in its otherwise inevitable suffering. Mechanical analogies are here superior to forensic, for we know that one force may be offset and so rendered inoperative by another. But mechanical analogies themselves are imperfect. In sin we are dealing with a diseased personality, and in forgiveness we see the cure of that which is diseased by the establishment of a

new situation from which flow new and regenerate personal outcomes in the place of those which otherwise would have flowed from the sinful soul.

To have a life strong enough through personal relations with God to overpower the force of the "body of death," the survivals of animalism, in the moral realm, is to have a life also strong enough to overcome its other result, death. The Christlike spiritual life is thus triumphant in man's entire personality. And that is what the modern man means by the divine forgiveness of which the earthly is so poor an analogy. It is a dynamic, a regenerating reconciliation.

This is one message of the resurrection of the crucified Christ. He stands forth as the very epitome and absolute type of what humanity is when forgiven. That generically human nature which was his was transformed because of the divine presence. He not only conquered sin in the region of conduct; he conquered death by surpassing the inherited physical nature from which sin springs. In a sense far truer than the realists among the schoolmen saw, in Jesus humanity was submitting to humanity's ultimate test. And it showed itself forgivable, not only in that Christ never yielded to the backward pull which was implicit in his very

humanity, but also in that by his resurrection there was exhibited the actual outcome in spiritual life of a union with God which forgiveness promises. The gospel is profoundly psychological in insisting that forgiveness must mean more than assurance of pardon and peace of soul. It must mean also the concrete effects of a reconciliation of two personalities to be seen in the outcome of the development of the weaker personality. And the ultimate outcome of a personality whose spiritual life has responded to and so is filled with God, both the New Testament and the modern man can see in the character and the resurrection of the Jesus who tasted the bitterness of death.

3. But our premises carry us one step farther into that which is objective. In the death and resurrection of Jesus God is revealed as an ethical unity. That is the answer to the fundamental philosophical question raised by the gospel — the question of whether God can be "just" and the "justifier" of those who accept Him. To its solution every theory of the atonement that is more than that of exemplary martyrdom has addressed itself. Each one of them tries to enforce upon those who share in its presuppositions that the moral order is eternal. Sin is not less dangerous, God is not

more lenient, because of the saving work of Jesus. In so far as Christ really individualized the immanent God did he exhibit in his experience the loving character of Him who established and sustains the process which attaches misery to sin. In his experience we see that such suffering is the sterner side of the divine self-manifestation in humanity. God is not indulgent in his forgiveness. He does not reverse his universe in order to check that suffering even though it pass upon so pure and innocent a soul as Jesus. Therein is set forth "the judgment of sin in the flesh," the awfulness of sin in a socially united world. However faint may be our confidence even in our own formulas, we can see in the experience of Jesus the worth and meaning of such a love. And in that assurance the sense of guilt born of a social experience in which law has become a universal presupposition, vanishes. Suffering is seen first, but love is seen supreme. While it is true we cannot see why man was so constituted that moral development brings suffering upon its leaders, we can see that the forces which compel such suffering, while immutable because the expression of God's will, are not supreme, but are rather only the tragic concomitants of that power of progress towards the spiritual which

argues and reveals divine presence and divine love. God as revealed in the dying and risen Jesus is seen to be ethically at one. To see this and to believe it is for the man who seeks to live the Christlike spiritual life of love and faith and service to lose all sense of fear and guilt.

4. This revelation of ethical unity in a God who is both law and love, justice and forgiveness, does not argue that the two qualities are coördinate. The Christian conception of God, confirmed and illuminated by a doctrine of the atonement, is one in which love is really supreme. As has already appeared, from such a point of view alone do we find unity in the process of the universe and particularly in humanity's struggle upward against sin and evil towards a spiritual life like Christ's. How much truer is it that only from such a point of view do we find an explanation of that which the gospel reveals as salvation. Love which is the supreme quality of the spiritual life in humanity is but the imperfect reflection of the Love which has been revealed in the Son. But it is a Love which expresses itself not alone in the single moment of the death of Jesus, but, as the gospel always insists, in the entire relationship of God and man revealed and "chaptered up," as Paul says, in Jesus. "The

lamb was slain before the foundation of the world" — this evangelic formula forever disabuses our thought of the death of Christ as an appendix of the work of God in creation and development in either the natural or the spiritual order. "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son to save the world" — this is the evangelic formula for the ultimate interpretation of the purpose of the entire life of Jesus. Love divine in him stooped to share in human weakness for the purpose of carrying on that work which humanity unaided could never hope to realize. In this love that seeks to save at the cost of its own suffering do we see the supreme and final meaning of the death of Christ. He stands not over against God, seeking to mitigate divine severity, but as the very embodiment of a love that dares suffer to protect its own law-abiding nature. And in his perception of such divine sympathy and fellow-suffering the modern man, even more than his brethren, makes his own the words of Paul — who in all the agony and sinfulness of life deemed himself more than conqueror through Him that loved us — "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

VII

Such an estimate of Jesus as removing all sense of guilt by his revelation of the actuality of forgiveness and the ethical unity and sympathy of God, reëmphasizes the truth that what the gospel calls the forgiveness of sin is really the negative side of what it also calls positively the new life in Christ. A really Christian soteriology must be vital as well as moral. Its different aspects may be expressed by innumerable figures, but the central fact itself must be more than figure. Grounding as we do our view of sin in the teaching given us by so many sciences that the individual is a mass of survivals which tend to reassert themselves, it is plain that in forgiveness we are dealing with the emancipated spiritual life rather than the removal of superimposed sentences. The Greek fathers here saw more clearly than the Latin. The deeper we probe sin the nearer do we find ourselves coming to the problems of life and death and the more are we convinced that any salvation that is more than empty definition must involve all aspects of personality. The gospel insists that we cannot stop simply in the region of release from punishment,

but must press on to appreciate the further and more positive message of the regeneration of the personality itself. The gospel is not only reasonable, it is dynamic. And the sinless, risen Jesus is the concrete embodiment of the realities it contains. Without him as a real person in history, belief in the consonance of the spiritual life with the natural order and confidence in its supremacy to that order, would be but a justifiable hope and a working hypothesis. Possessed of him this belief becomes a faith that will move mountains.

CHAPTER VII

THE DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

DEATH, like life, is without definition. Physiologists may tell us what they hope to discover, but they can only tell us their hopes. We know that certain chemical processes cease and certain others begin, but we know little else as to what happens when a man dies. For this if for no other reason humanity would hate death; but there is a deeper reason for such hatred. There is the elemental impulse in all living organisms to protect the generic life of which they are a part; and this passion to perpetuate life, either of the organism itself or by the way of descendants, lies back of more of the elements of our civilization than at first appear.

But humanity sees even more in death than a break in the continuity of physical life. It wonders what becomes of the personality. From the very moment when primitive man first stood beside his dead the question of the future has returned to turn mourning to bitterness. Every man knows that death awaits both him and those he loves. The answer of the race to this fact has been a challenge to death. Account

for the belief in immortality as you will, it is deep in the heart of the race.

I

The Hebrew saw little more than the darker side of death. His dead he believed had gone into Sheol, the great pit below the earth, and there they lived a shadowy, gray life, without interests, longing for the richer life they had left. Later, the Jew came to think of Sheol as of something more than a place of abode and imagined it divided into four great sections: the most miserable for sinners who had been happy on earth; the most blessed for the righteous who had been miserable upon earth; and between these extremes, two other regions, one for the sinners who had been miserable and the other for the righteous who had been happy in life. But hatred of his enemies as well as his persistent sense of moral fitness led him to describe the first section or place of punishment more distinctly. To his imagination it became a lake of fire prepared in the first instance for the giants who were the children of the fallen angels and the daughters of men, but also the place of torment for demons and all those who had oppressed Israel.

1. This awful future was brought into relationship with death. There was misery before the suffering

set by the sentence of the Judgment Day. All, whether bad or good, for a time were disembodied. Souls were naked in Sheol awaiting that great Day of Judgment in which the wicked were to be sent to the punishments of hell and the righteous should be called upward to assume new bodies and enter the glorious new kingdom which, already in heaven, was to be established upon the earth. Such a conception of resurrection of the individual sprang from a belief in the resurgence of the nation. All Jews were to have a part in the blessing of the messianic reign. Sometimes the hope grew very materialistic. The righteous were to have eternal life, says the Enoch literature, were to live five hundred years and have four hundred children. The fruits of the earth were to be indefinitely increased and there was to be incalculable wealth of grain and wine.

It would not be fair, however, to say that the Jew uniformly believed in the resurrection of the flesh. The words of Josephus imply that the new bodies into which the Pharisees believed the soul of the righteous were to enter might be something very different from those that were flesh. The entire scope of Pharisaism would seem also to argue that its conception of the resurrection had moved out from the purely physical to something like a transcendental conception.

2. It is this conception that to some extent at least reappears in the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. The eschatology of the New Testament combines after the fashion of the Jewish Apocalypses two great conceptions: the resurrection of the individual, and the establishment of a new social order. Of the latter we shall speak presently. We are now concerned with the former element. Bare immortality in the sense of a mere continuous existence of the personality after death is not the evangelic doctrine. That is far more specific. The resurrection of the dead as it is presented by Jesus both in the synoptic and in the Johannine teaching is clearly more than physical reanimation. Those who attain to it are neither to marry nor to be given in marriage, and Paul emphatically declared that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but that the new body which awaits the Christian dead is a spiritual body. Such a great change is really a deliverance from death as well as from Sheol. That is to say, the state of the personality which death established is to be ended and the loss of the physical organism is to be met by the gift of another better adjusted to spiritual environment.

Distinct as this gospel is, it is no more so than the teaching as to the basis on which this body of the

resurrection is obtained. It is the outcome of the transformation of the human personality through the presence of God, the Holy Spirit. A man is not only saved morally in the sense that he was given strength to resist temptation, but he is to be saved, if we may use the term, in a biological psychological sense.

Such a conception sprang directly from that of death as the punishment of sin. To save a man from sin is to save him from the consequence of sin and sinfulness. So much, as we have seen, was revealed in the experience of Jesus. The work of God in the soul was held to be regenerating not because a man thereby gained immortality, for it seems to have been all but universally believed that all men survived death in the sense that their shades went to Sheol, but in the sense of an advance through death to a higher, more spiritual life. The gospel properly interpreted is something more than a series of naïve promises of heaven to good people and hell to bad people. There is in it a genetic conception according to which the future state of a personality is conditioned by the adjustment of such personality to the normal and dynamic situation created between God and itself through the act of faith. He would be a very superficial interpreter who failed to see that this was an essential part of the gospel conception

of salvation. The difficulty of expressing it in terms of a scientific vocabulary is, of course, evident. But however expressed, the hope is fundamental in the gospel. It is one thing to survive death; it is another thing to share in the resurrection. The one is static; the other is progressive. The Christian doctrine of immortality is a phase of the Christian doctrine of the evolution of the free spiritual personality. Such an advance away from the conditions set by merely animal existence to those set by more spiritual environment can be enjoyed only by those who are in proper relationship with the constructive forces of the spiritual order. Sin by its very nature is a lack of such harmony with God as makes for the development of the personality away from that which it holds in common with the beast. Sin, therefore, is something more than what we conventionally call an ethical quality. It carries within itself forces of degeneration which death completes. The gospel teaches that chief among the results of this devolution are, negatively, the failure to experience the resurrection in the Christian sense; and second, positively, the suffering which comes from the unnatural relationship with God. It is true that in one or two cases the New Testament speaks of the resurrection of condemnation, but the reference here is to some-

thing other than the resurrection of the body. It is rather to the summoning of all souls from Sheol for the purpose of judgment at the bar of God, an element of the eschatological program that Christianity inherited from Jewish cosmology. Mere existence was not a good to Paul. That which he longed for and which he believed all sane men longed for was a higher type of life which drew joy and peace and noblest development from the normal, spiritual relationship of the soul with God; and this obviously could be possible only to those who had experienced the great reconciliation.

II

To a considerable extent these general conceptions of the New Testament are independent of the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, but their influence upon human lives and so their real place in theology are in point of fact controlled by the disciples' belief in the reality of that event. The modern man, however, finds himself in a very different attitude of mind from that of the early disciples. Where a belief in individual immortality exists among the scientific and philosophic classes it is Greek rather than Jewish. Indeed it is undeniable that many modern thinkers find it difficult to conceive of im-

mortality except in terms of society or of impersonal influence or of the absorption of the individual soul into the Whole. It is not strange, therefore, that with such views on the one side and with a suspicion of all miracles on the other, the resurrection of Jesus, so far from helping the modern man as it did the apostles to focus and give content to existing ideas or expectations of immortality, should rather prove an element of the gospel most difficult to accept.

We have here another illustration of the failure to see that the gospel is something other than the mass of opinions and dogmas which have grown up about it. In particular do we have an illustration of the fact that men allow their *a priori* objections to forestall the results of historical criticism. Looked at in the large, the refusal of our modern world to accept the Christian evangelic hope of the resurrection is due to the very simple belief that in the nature of the case such a hope is impossible of realization. This objection, although involving the old suspicion of whatever is contrary to uniform experience, really goes a step farther and estops the plea in rebuttal that uniform experience has its exceptions. It seems necessary therefore to consider the *a priori* objection to immortality before considering the resurrection of Jesus.

1. A belief in immortality is a legitimate outcome of what we know of life.

I do no mean to argue that a dissecting table is a platform from which to peer into heaven, or that the conception of life as a purely physical and chemical process conduces to a conviction that it can continue after such process has ceased. Nor would I use the term in the sense of a principle which exists as an independent force in the universe, although one could plead great names for such a view. I would use the term rather in a broader and I must confess a less defined sense. This, however, is by no means to ruin my case. The word is admittedly without definition, a sort of ideograph picturing a group of phenomena the causes of which are not yet thoroughly known. But this much seems clear; However life originated it has been constantly struggling to express itself in more complicated forms and in ways less dependent on what, for lack of a better term, we can call impersonal forces. That is, it grows more personal and individual. It is the at least partial possession of these latter qualities that distinguishes men from their animal kindred. Our vocabularies at this point are likely to be misleading, but whatever else life may include in humanity it is far more elaborate and self-directive than in the beast or the

plant. Human personality as an expression of life has in itself irresistible impulses to express itself in still other and less materialistic forms. It makes little difference whether we call this personal life a spirit or simply a new aspect of life itself. There is in every man a quality we call spiritual,—a quality in a striking way to be described by the theist as in the image of God. This spiritual life is that to which all the past seems to point, and this it is that is the seat of whatever creative freedom humanity has. And this spiritual life is ever struggling to more complete self-expression,—a fact recognized by all attempts at psychological analysis as well as by every attempt at formulating the impulse to moral idealism. It is as impossible to say why life struggles thus to transfer itself into higher and ultimately more spiritual terms as to say why it seeks to propagate and protect itself; but to recognize such an impulse is only to take account of that which really is.

Now a belief in immortality insists that this process is assisted by the death of the physical organism. It holds that as in the history of that life there have constantly been developed types which are ever less dependent on purely material situations, there comes a time when, in terms of the spiritual personality, it is sufficiently individualized to be completely superior

to the physical organism. However far we are as yet from understanding the relationship of spiritual life with the physical, we have come far enough to recognize that the moral and æsthetic and rational powers of the personality are something very different from the physical life from which they have sprung. Embryology, in either the physical or the spiritual realms, is not to be confused with physiology.

2. The most serious answer to such *a priori* arguments as these for the persistence of personality seems to me to come from the side of sociology. And this reply is in brief that such a new stage in the process through which humanity is passing means the development of a higher genus rather than the perpetuation and development of the individual himself. And it must be admitted that such an objection has great weight. But at bottom it is a matter of the interpretation of process itself. Is the end to which evolution tends the individual or the group? It would seem to me that there can be only one answer: the ultimate of the evolutionary process is the completed free individual. That is to say, a personality that finds its completed self-expression not in a physical, but in a spiritual, more completely personal situation. The history of humanity itself seems to warrant such an interpretation. For social institutions have never

been ends in themselves. Men have tried to make them such, but invariably there has arisen above the institutional interpretation of society that more creative impulse to see in humanity persons on the way to free individuality rather than a new race. He has always been regarded the most nearly perfect man who has proved himself most superior to the physical and imperfectly personal forces in which he finds himself involved. From such a point of view death is a new birth. The personality reached in our moment of physical life is, so to speak, the embryo of that new stage which is made possible by the emancipation of self from the survival of the strictly physiological aspects of the process. Indeed, were it not that observation is so much more difficult, it would be hardly more perplexing to see how a life like Jesus' can persist through the change of death than how it persisted through the change of birth. The paraphrase of Professor Royce sums up the whole matter: "This mortal must put on individuality."

3. Nor is this quite all that can be said. Men of science are very properly cautious as to speculations regarding the subconscious or subliminal self, but a review of the psychological tendencies of the past ten or a dozen years will show that, despite such caution, the belief that the self is more than its conscious

states has gained steady acceptance. Questions of terminology cannot obscure this fact. Whatever term may be used, whether the soul be regarded as an infinitely etherized matter or as spirit, it is no longer permissible to doubt that the self has qualities and potencies which are other than those which used to make the definitions of the soul. Below its outcropping in the conscious act or thought or emotion, there is the great ledge of personality.

Difficult as is the method of its investigation, this subconscious — I use the word only for lack of a better — must form one element of every formula of personality. On it an argument for immortality can be and has been grounded. For its existence is a constant reminder that the self cannot be conceived of as a mere aggregation of conscious states and that in this deeper, more spiritual unity there lie powers which may very easily be conceived to survive those conditions which make the separate states of consciousness possible. That is to say, the self in other conditions than those set by the nervous organism might give rise to states of consciousness, wholly regardless of memory in the ordinary physiological sense of the term. Who of us remembers his infancy? And yet our stream of consciousness is unbroken.

I am well aware that much of this is speculation. It could not well be more. But it is none the less a speculation very different from that with which Socrates would prove immortality in terms of preëxistence, for it at least follows a trail whose beginnings have been blazed by psychology. And as speculation it is calculated to break down the other speculation by which it is asserted that immortality is *a priori* impossible. In fact, with all due regard to the uncertainty of the nature of immortality and without sanctioning all or indeed any of the particular hypotheses which have been derived from this theory of the subliminal self, it seems to me beyond question that we are to-day as never before in a position to recognize the reasonableness of a genuine Christian doctrine of immortality at least as a working hypothesis. Having reached this point, the belief of the disciples in the resurrection of Jesus and their hope of their own appear far more tenable.

4. In the minds of many people this is as far as one can safely go in the region of antecedent possibilities. But there are others, of whom I confess I am one, who find in themselves a growing readiness to believe that sooner or later the existence of the human personality after death will become a matter of experiment. The work of the Society of Psychical Research and its

allied organizations can hardly be said to have resulted in convincing conclusions, but it has at least raised questions which suggest positive rather than negative answers. We certainly have not reached the limit of that which can be known, but our ignorance is no longer unillumined by hope. The human soul can no longer be regarded as a function of the brain, and telepathy and hypernormal communications may yet reveal to us the truth and the meaning of those doctrines which have long been based on hope alone. At all events it can hardly be denied that the question of immortality is passing from the region of religion in the ordinary sense of the word to that of science. Sooner or later the view of science, whatever that may be, will here prevail among modern men. The desire for immortality will hardly be taken always as conclusive evidence of a life after death. That view alone can be regarded as final which is determined by our knowledge of the human personality. And even now such a knowledge bids men pause before saying that personal energy is to be conserved only by being transformed into mechanical and chemical forces. Values persist as truly as electrons.

But to my mind this is to say that we may dare hope that one of these days we shall find science doing for

the doctrine of immortality what it has done for our conception of creation ; namely, furnish the religious mind with clear evidence of the presence of reason and law in human history and destiny. And although I question much of his "evidence," I find myself responding to these words of the late F. W. H. Myers: —

"I venture now on a bold saying ; for I predict that, in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men, a century hence, will believe the resurrection of Christ, whereas in default of the new evidence, no reasonable man, a century hence, would have believed it. The ground of this forecast is plain enough. Our ever growing recognition of the continuity, the uniformity of cosmic law has gradually made of the alleged uniqueness of any incident its almost inevitable refutation. Ever more clearly must our age of science realize that any relation between a material and a spiritual world cannot be an ethical or emotional relation alone; that it must needs be a great structural fact of the universe, involving laws at least as persistent and identical from age to age as our known laws of energy or of motion."

III

Let us then look at the resurrection of Jesus from the point of view not of that which could not be, but of that which, not antecedently impossible, was or was not according to reliability of evidence. Immediately we see that we are by no means so stricken

with poverty of such evidence as it has sometimes been alleged. The oldest documents which we have in Christianity, the letters of Paul, center about the fact and describe the evidence on which Paul accepted it. This is by no means that of one person, but of hundreds of persons, most of whom still lived at the time when Paul wrote. The stories of the resurrection in the gospels must have originated during the lifetime of those very persons who could have denied their existence. And it is to be borne in mind that the sources of these gospel records of the resurrection-faith are not derived one from the other, but are almost without exception independent of each other, thus representing the faith of Christians scattered over a very wide geographical area.

1. If we start with that which is no longer seriously denied even by negative critics, viz. that the early Christians honestly believed they had seen Jesus after his crucifixion, the only really vital question before us is whether or not they were deceived. At this point a man is certain to turn to his presuppositions. If one believes that it is more probable that they were deceived than that they saw what they said they saw, the argument is closed, except as one may attack that major premise by asking: Why is it

more improbable? The answer can only be, because it is contrary to the ordinary run of human experience — and we are back again on the ground of Hume; a position which as I have tried to show is steadily growing less tenable. How, if there were no facts to warrant its rise, are we to account for this faith of the disciples — a faith which antedates the organization of the church; a faith which is older than any Christian theology; a faith which grew up in the midst of the very generation and in the very city in which the events were believed to have taken place?

2. There have been a variety of hypotheses with which to account for the origin of the belief. We have been told that Jesus was not dead; that he simply swooned and was brought to consciousness in the cool tomb. But this involves so many difficulties as to have been abandoned by all serious students.

We have been told that the disciples deliberately concocted the story for selfish ends. This, too, has passed away as lying outside of that which is reasonable.

We have been told that the Egyptians believed in the resurrection of Osiris and the Syrians in the resurrection of Tammuz, and the Assyrians in the recall of Ishtah's husband from Sheol.

We have had the disciples' belief referred to sun

myths and spring myths, and in fact to every sort of myth that the student of comparative religion has been able to discover. Just at present we have as a suggested explanation that the belief in the resurrection was due to a combination in the disciples' minds of auto-suggestion, religious faith, value judgments, mob psychology, and the messianic hope, the hypothesis being buttressed by reference to legends as to the alleged resurrections of Saints.

3. I do not think I underestimate the difficulties which lie in the belief in the resurrection as an historical fact. I am not prepared to deny that there may be secondary additions in the gospels as they now stand; but after all reasonable allowance has been made, after the story of the resurrection has been brought to its oldest form as we find it in the Pauline documents, I must frankly say that for me all of these explanations are more difficult than that which they would explain. They refuse in the first place to acknowledge in Jesus, in whom men find the worth of God, any more power than they see in Socrates; in the second place they assume that it is impossible for any communication between the dead and the living to take place; in the third place they practically assume that immortality in itself is an open question; and in the fourth place they assume that it would

have been possible for hundreds of men and women so to deceive themselves, not consciously, but from the excess of love and faith, as to believe that the one, who had disappointed all their hopes, had given the lie to their messianic expectations, and had become the victim of their enemies, had appeared after death, had ascended to God, and was to come again to establish the kingdom which he had once failed to establish. And finally, as if to intensify the difficulties, they insist that the faith thus cruelly defeated was so strong that when its possessors came together it developed an auto-suggestion which was visualized into a form so distinct and commanding as to become the basis of a religion. For my own part, in view of the weakening of the antecedent improbability of personal immortality, I would rather make a working hypothesis of the disciples' experiences as trustworthy rather than of such highly subjective conjectures, however much they may claim the support of a scientific vocabulary.

And this conviction is strengthened as one recalls that the chief witness, Paul, who claims to have seen Jesus himself, was himself subject to visions. He therefore knew the difference between an experience of the risen Christ and those other experiences, such as that one in which he is said to have been caught

up in the third heaven. In fact, the entire history of the apostolic church affords data which make it evident that the very persons who believed in visions and dreams made a distinction between such experience and the appearance of the risen Christ. They were, so to speak, connoisseurs in visions, and their testimony to the fact that their experiences of Jesus were more objective than that of their visions is in a fashion that of experts.

IV

But in what did they believe these experiences consisted? In other words, what does the gospel mean by the resurrection?

1. The point of departure for any investigation of such a difficult matter is the writings of Paul, particularly the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians and the fifth chapter of 2 Corinthians. From these chapters it is apparent that Paul did not believe that the Jesus who appeared to him was flesh and blood. Flesh and blood, he declares, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. It is also apparent that he finds it impossible to give even a quasi-scientific description of what the body of the resurrection is to be. For when that question is raised he at once proceeds to argue by analogy that it is to be different from the body that is

"sown." More positively he declares it to be a spiritual body.

In their present forms, our gospels are later than the writings of Paul, and in all four we have accounts which are much more concrete. The difference between their views and the views of Paul must have been as evident to the early Christians as they are to us, but would doubtless be explained on the supposition that the Jesus who appeared to Paul was the Jesus who had ascended to heaven, while the Jesus who appeared to the disciples on the first Easter and during the forty days had not yet "ascended to the Father." And such a view has at least this justification: if the Jesus who had appeared to Paul had been in precisely the same form as the Jesus who is reported to have appeared to Mary Magdalene and Peter, it is probable that when he raised the question as to the nature of the spiritual body Paul would have referred directly to the body of that Jesus who was to him the first fruits of those who sleep.

Yet the words of Paul are not altogether out of harmony with those of the four gospels, and any historical method must proceed from those elements which are common to all the gospels to those which are peculiar to different narratives. Any resulting discrepancies may then be tested by the Pauline conception as that which is critically the oldest.

2. In such a procedure it becomes at once apparent that all of the gospels look upon the risen Jesus as possessed of certain powers quite unlike those possessed by him before death. True, the gospels conceive some sort of identity between the body of the risen Jesus and the body that was laid in the tomb, and to this the position taken by Paul in 1 Corinthians can hardly be said to be opposed. But the resurrection of Jesus was not of a sort with the raising from the dead of Jairus' daughter and the widow's son and Lazarus. In each of these three cases we have not resurrection but simply the reanimation of the old life. Every one of the three was to die again. In the case of Jesus, however, the resurrection was not to be followed by death and was more than reanimation. It involved some sort of passage from the purely physical to a higher form of life less subject to the limitations of the physical world, more personal because more spiritual.

It is customary among some scholars to make a sharp distinction between the mode of existence of Jesus during the forty days subsequent to his resurrection and that mode in which he is believed now to be existing. That is to say, they regard the forty days as a period of gradual transformation of the body from the fleshly to the spiritual body. The

modern man is likely to be critical of such a hypothesis, and yet if he once asserts that the faith of the New Testament is not wholly one of misapprehension he must at least treat it with respect; for it is an attempt at constructive theory. On the one side, although the empty tomb does not seem to be absolutely demanded by the Pauline conception of the resurrection, it is clear enough that the earliest stratum of the resurrection hope presupposed a belief that the body had disappeared. But by whom was it removed? The ancient tradition is that the Pharisees charged the disciples with removing it; but such a charge is absurd on the face of it. Did then the Pharisees remove it? So some claim. But what was to be gained by such an act? It is, of course, true that *a priori* argument at a distance of nineteen hundred years is precarious, but the difficulty of explaining away the ancient belief in the empty tomb should at least suggest some hesitation on the part of those men who would summarily wash the entire matter off the slate of history.

The fundamental fact is that the early disciples had some sort of experience of Jesus after his death. This simple fact is as evangelic as it seems critically assured. It is impossible for me, with what knowledge I have been able to gain of the pre-Christian messi-

anic hope, to see how the belief in the resurrection could have sprung from the disciples' faith in Jesus as Christ. Rather the contrary is true. Facts compelled the belief; it was not created by the faith. When it comes, however, to the shaping up of any absolutely self-consistent explanation as to what these experiences really were, it is mere elemental honesty to say that such explanation lies beyond our power. We certainly cannot uncritically mass the gospel accounts into such a theory. At any rate no scholar has ever succeeded in the attempt. But such an impossibility, I am sure, arises from our ignorance of the soul and the nature of human personality on the one side and the whole field of supernormal experience on the other. If it should ever be shown more clearly than it is to-day that in certain nervous conditions human beings are unusually susceptible to super-physical influences, we might in such a fact find a clew that would be worth following. At all events it does not seem to me to be in any way unlikely that some partial hypothesis will some day be forthcoming. In the meantime it is not necessary to wait upon the invention of new terms or the ability to explain fully an experience that is well attested as actual historical fact.

4. It is sometimes argued that the belief in the

resurrection of Jesus as anything more than a purely subjective experience carries with it corresponding belief in the "levitation" of Jesus. Undoubtedly such is a possible inference from the New Testament records, but after all the sting of "levitation" lies in the belief that the early Christian Church held to a physical disappearance of a flesh and bone Jesus in heaven. That is to be denied. "Resurrection" and "ascension" are not identical turns. It was not the earthly body Jesus that disappeared in heaven, according to the faith of the early disciples; it was the transformed body. Even if they regarded the resurrection at its inception as physical, the ascended Christ was the Lord the Spirit. This may not make the matter any more scientifically intelligible, but it certainly makes the primitive faith self-consistent. However we may account for the story of the ascension it is undeniable that in a few weeks (except in the case of Paul) the experiences of the risen Christ ceased and in their place came that spiritual enthusiasm and invigoration which the New Testament calls the "gift of the Spirit."

5. In any conclusion it is well to call to mind that in the expectation of the early church the remarkable thing in the resurrection of Jesus was not that he alone of all mankind was to experience that great

change. All the Christians expected the same in the Day of Judgment. The really remarkable thing was that he had showed himself alive after his passion to his followers; that is to say, before the Day of Judgment which they expected, he had had power sufficient to break across the boundary of death and to impress himself in some way upon those who were in particularly sympathetic relationship with him. In him the triumph of the spiritual life is seen in the realm of physical forces as it had been already seen in the realm of morals. As Paul so strikingly declared, he had brought life and incorruption to light.

V

1. It must be admitted that such a position as this which I have outlined, with its frank admission of inability to form a scientifically precise statement as to the actual nature of the resurrection, may serve to disbar it from acceptance by those who on the one hand find no difficulty in taking the New Testament stories at their face value, and on the other by those who refuse to accept testimony as to any fact which does not permit, through experimentation, undoubted and complete correlation with our existing knowledge. Like all attempts at finding the common divisor in conflicting evidence, it is likely to be rejected by

divergent parties. But after all what does the religious man really demand in the case? Can he not believe in the genuineness of some sort of a well-attested experience of Jesus on the part of disciples without knowing whether the risen Master ate fish or kindled a fire? The sublime truth that stands out in the resurrection of Jesus is the emancipation of the spiritual life from the physical order as culminating in death, not information as to physiological details.

Even those scholars who now doubt the explanation given by the apostles to their undoubtedly historical experience are at one in insisting that their own confidence in immortality is largely derived from the gospel message; and that is something which is not to be underestimated. The story of the resurrection of Jesus is not meant to satisfy our human lust for wonders. Negative and constructive critics are one at the essential point that the gospel brings new confidence in the purpose and goal of human development. Immortality in the Christian sense does not mean that human life simply takes up its old interests. It means a new birth upward; a new advance, a new stage of human evolution; a freer and more complete spiritual personality.

2. From the point of view of evolution something

like the resurrection of Jesus seems to be demanded. For, as has already been said, the course of evolution has not been simply towards the production of new species. It is rather towards the production of decreasingly animal and consequently increasingly free spiritual individuality. It is at this point that the gospel appears to give significance to the process. In a sense almost startlingly true, Jesus is a second Adam. As the first man marked the rise of the new type of individual above the brute, so Jesus reveals the completion of the next step ahead in the process of the development of the spiritual individual. The *a priori* probability that there should develop some life through its identity with the End of the spiritual order made strong enough to conquer the conditions set by our physical limitations, is met by the message that such a life has appeared. The *a priori* probability meets the historical.

It is from this union that the resurrection of Jesus as more than the creation of the faith of the disciples becomes of real significance to the modern man. He will find difficulties in some of the details of the record, but in the larger probability that such a personality as that of Jesus, so obviously at the pinnacle of human moral development, should have had power to express itself as triumphantly over the ultimate

collapse of physical nature as over the temptations due to that physical nature, he will find a new help for his interpretation of his own deepest longings and an answer to that tragic question which we all face as to the meaning of our life. The gospel is a message of salvation not only in that it helps a man to be free from sin, but in that it interprets and even glorifies that all too seemingly relentless process in which we find ourselves involved. We do not believe in immortality simply because we believe in the story of the resurrection of Jesus, but with that story immortality gains a new value. We do not ground morality on immortality as such, but on the spiritual quality of life that can eventuate in such a triumph over anti-personal forces as we see in the case of Jesus. The resurrection is not something which must be believed in addition to that which we do believe, but with the weakening of the *a priori* objections against it, it may become what indeed the early church and in fact Christians of the centuries have claimed it to be — a means of bringing life and incorruption to light; a demonstration of the finality of the life of love.

And unless I greatly mistake, the modern world is in serious danger of losing that estimate of the worth of the spiritual life which is given by the gospel with its insistence upon resurrection. With the assurance that

the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus affords, a modern man sees new significance in the ever present moral struggle, gets new estimates of the worth of the life of love and sacrifice, and a larger and more compelling impulse to reproduce in his daily living that supreme life in the spirit which was lived by Jesus himself. He sees new meaning in the process in which he finds himself involved, new hopes for the race about which he had almost despaired. He realizes as he otherwise never could realize the meaning of God's presence in his world, and experiences as he otherwise never would experience the regeneration that comes to him who dares let God transform his being. He will have many questions — his very joy will prompt him to seek ever more completely the meaning of the new life he lives. But of one thing he will be assured: a reasonable gospel of deliverance from death — not from dying — to him as to every one who believes, whether he be modern or otherwise, will prove itself to be a message of inspiration and a moral dynamic. He will be less easily wearied in well-doing as he sees that his labor is not in vain in the Lord.

PART III

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER VIII

THE TEST OF LIFE

In our discussion thus far, we have been concerned not so much with proving that the gospel is true in itself as that it is reasonable from the point of view of the modern man who recognizes the presence of God in his universe and trusts the impulses and potencies of his own spiritual life to seek foundation and reënforcement in God. In the great struggle between culture and faith, — a struggle that ought never to have arisen, but which ever since the days of Goethe has been waged with unceasing energy — two lines of strategy have been followed by the leaders of Christian thought. The one has been the direct defense of the Christian revelation in itself; the other has been the establishment of the reasonableness of the act and attitude of Christian faith. Both have had their victories, but in our present day the second line of defense is the more effective. Whatever

may be true of the metaphysical arguments for the existence of God and for the nature of the Trinity, Christian faith itself can be justified. Its champion can hopefully leave to the metaphysician the task of proving truths that lie beyond experience; he himself can show that it is reasonable to exercise faith in God. The two lines of argument will doubtless meet; they are by no means mutually exclusive. But nevertheless the modern man finds the religious and practical argument more in accord with his hard-won anti-metaphysical temper.

If our task has been in any way fulfilled, it has appeared that the gospel of the New Testament when once seen in its elements and systematized by the modern equivalents of its original coördinating concepts, is consistent with those other facts and presuppositions which the modern man has come to accept. But it might appear that the gospel was left, as it were, in stable equilibrium. A further step must be taken. The gospel must not appear to be merely tenable; it must be seen to have power. "The man of science," says Huxley somewhere, "has learned to believe in justification, not by faith but by verification." Verification means experiment, the demonstration of practicability. If the gospel is to be a message of deliverance, it must deliver.

I

The evidence of practical accomplishment has always been claimed for Christian teaching. As far back as the early apologists we find Aristides appealing eloquently to the great philosopher-Emperor to acknowledge the Christians as taxpayers and loyal citizens. The unknown writer of the beautiful epistle to Diognetus declares that the Christians are to the world what the soul is to the body. Throughout the succeeding centuries the defender of Christianity has always found a great argument in the effect of Christian faith upon conduct, while the historian has recognized the influence of the church in the formation of European civilization.

Of late however the test has somewhat changed its character. The importance of religion as an expression of human nature, at least in certain of its stages of development, is admitted, but for various reasons religion, and particularly the Christian religion as expressed in the gospel, is judged not altogether practicable or adapted to our modern life. Let us look first at two general grounds for doubting the practicability of the gospel.

1. It is argued that Christianity is an oriental religion, and accordingly is ill adapted to the Western world.

The general differences between oriental and occidental minds are well known, at least in so far as religions are concerned. The East is said to be more meditative and mystic, the West more practical. But the distinction certainly does not apply to the gospel, true as it is of the teaching of the great Indian literatures. The gospel may have originated in Palestine, but it is not oriental in character. Nor would any man who respects the definitions of his terms characterize the Hebrew thought as philosophic. It was intensely practical. The prophets never speculated; they counseled action. The Jews since Ezra's time have never been out and out orientals; they have been cosmopolitan. So, too, in the teaching of Jesus there is hardly a sentence that can in any sense be said to be merely philosophical. Jesus is more a prophet and poet than one who reflects over the nature of things. The Fourth Gospel, it is true, moves out into a little different atmosphere, but it is largely a reworking of the teachings of Jesus by the evangelist, and even then it is far more akin to the philosophy of the West than it is to the philosophy of the East. The Logos doctrine was the bequest of the Greek. I do not doubt that at some points the oriental mind may discover significance in Jesus' words that might elude the less intuitive thinking of our

modern world. But I fail to see any serious limitations which are set upon the occidental interpretation of the gospel on the ground that it is an oriental product. Compare the gospel of Mark with the Bhagavad Gita and then, if you can, say they are of the same spirit.

2. A far more serious objection to the gospel on the side of practical living is that it is excessively individualistic.

It is a little difficult for me to appreciate the force of this objection. The individualism which the gospel inculcates is farthest possible from that insulated individualism set forth in certain phases of Christian theology and particularly in oriental philosophies. According to these latter teachings, perfection is to be reached by the complete withdrawal of men from social life, by defrauding all the social impulses. The individualism of the gospel, paradoxical as it may seem, is social. A man is to reach his fullest self-expression in the altruistic life of love. That life alone can be reënforced by the Holy Spirit. Salvation, in the terms of the New Testament, consists in possessing the quality of life which constitutes a man's being a member of the kingdom of God; and the kingdom of God, no matter how eschatological it may have been

regarded by the Jews and the early Christians, was a social order.

The claim that the gospel induces excessive individualism is true only of that perverted application of its message which would insist that a man reaches his salvation in other ways than those set by the gospel itself. No man can fail to honor those noble misrepresentations of Christian self-sacrifice which led men and women to abandon family, and city, and country, and seek peace with their God as hermits. He will not altogether decry that search for an individualistic salvation that seeks heaven with its blessings rather than hell with its pains. For even thus men have been led to a service to society in almsgiving and homely helpfulness. The evidence, however, of the unnaturalness of the Christianity which such conduct involves is to be seen in the fact that such men and women so frequently slip over the border line into eccentricity, or spiritual pride and unfraternal condescension. Christianity in so far as it has attempted to reproduce the real spirit of the gospel has made toward democracy. This in itself is an evidence that the individualism which it inculcates has its social element. The more other-worldly the Puritan was, the more did he insist on town meetings. History

is punctuated by those self-sacrificing groups of men who have attempted to live in some form a communistic life in accordance with what seemed to them to be the real principles of the individual's life in the spirit.

And, after all, is not the gospel, just because it does magnify a true sort of individualism, much closer to the nature of things than if it sought to subordinate the individual to society? Which is truer to fact — that the individual exists for the benefit of society or that society is a part of that situation in which the individual may reach his most completely personal self-expression? To my mind there can be only one answer to such question. The entire process of history seems to be the development of the free personality as over against the production of a new society. Religion may be described as the voluntary anticipation of the next stage of this process whose goal is the perfected spiritual individual, through personal union with God.

But the gospel of freedom is not to be taken too literally. If men are not twins because they are brothers, so in the larger fraternity of the spirit, they are not free from limitations set by the necessity of living in social groups. Society in the best sense of the word is a means to freedom. One

cannot read the works of Tolstoi without feeling that in his reaction against the conception of government to which he as a Russian is accustomed, he has overlooked the social element in the free personality. Coöperation among individuals is involved in a personal environment. The anti-governmental teachings of Tolstoi, serviceable as they are as an antidote to mere conventionality, can never become anything more than a sort of seasoning in our social life. A truer conception of the gospel as setting forth the way to the freedom of a social individualism, will regard it as the real leaven of society.

II

If, however, apart from over-statement we consider the practicability of the gospel as a message of a free spiritual life in a changing social order like ours, we certainly face a most serious matter. For any teaching that lies beyond the power of realization will be powerless in the same proportion as men realize its impracticability.

There confronts us at the very outset the fundamental question as to whether the conceptions upon which the ethics of the gospel rest are really final. Is the life of love and sacrifice the noblest sort of life? Such a question will doubtless seem absurd

to those who have accepted the Christian ideal as a social convention. Though no one has ever embodied it fully, yet the consensus of opinion in Christian civilizations has been that the ideal of love and service, even at the expense of sacrifice, is really that toward which humanity should strive. On this we base our final apologetic: though Jesus — and this seems to me the Ultima Thule of improbability, — were to be shown never to have existed, the values which the gospel has brought into life would be eternal.

But we are no more content with such a minimum of defense than with mere conventionally rhetorical praise. If the gospel is to remain a power in society it involves something pretty close to a revolution in many of the forms of our life. It is imperative that those who claim allegiance to it should pause long enough to face the fundamental questions which their profession of loyalty to Jesus involves.

1. There are those who insist that the gospel as an ethical ideal is imperfect because of its use of reward and punishment.

There is nothing to which the academic ethicist is so opposed as to rewards and punishments. And his opposition is justified in the same proportion as

those terms are seen to stand for arbitrary assignments of fate in the way of bribes or threats. To urge a man to be good in order that he may go to heaven and not go to hell is a good deal like telling your boy that if he will be honest you will give him fifty cents. Virtue like honesty may be the best policy, but a man who is virtuous through policy is likely to be vicious when he judges vice the best policy. Further, it cannot be denied that in certain stages of civilization Christian teachers have so used this appeal as to shock the moral sense of the more intelligent members of the community.

It does not seem to me, however, that it is difficult to reply to such an objection. It is due to a misunderstanding of the gospel and to a literalizing of figures of speech. Substitute "genetic outcomes" for "rewards and punishment" and most of the difficulty vanishes. It is only the legalistic conception of ethics which gives room for the distortion of gospel teaching to which objection can be raised. And the gospel knows nothing of statutes. It knows only personalities. Its purpose is to get men saved, to possess a quality of life, not external goods, whether in terms of prosperity or heaven. It teaches distinctly that evil states bring suffering and that righteous states bring joy and peace. But neither

outcome is external to the personality. Each is involved genetically as an outcome of states of activity. One would not say that a physician was dealing with rewards and punishment when he points out that one course of action involved disease and so suffering, or that another course of action involved health and so physical comfort. Jesus was the Great Physician. The gospel is his prescription.

2. A more fundamental objection, however, lies in that philosophy to which Nietzsche has given vogue, but which is really far older than he. According to Nietzsche the fundamental principle of life is the "will to power." That is the precise opposite of love. According to him, there are two sorts of morality, that of the master and that of the slave. Christian morality belongs to the second. It puts a premium on weakness, and through its care for the weaker tends to restrain the fundamental impulse of life to master environment, both personal and impersonal, and must therefore lead ultimately to the deterioration of the race. Above all moral conceptions which are the outgrowth of passing social needs, and are given authority by religion, there is the great impulse which, beyond all standards of good and evil, the masters of the race must embody.

It is not difficult to see that, despite its commendable emphasis on the supreme worth of personality, such a conception of ethics is fundamentally hostile to the one elemental presupposition of the gospel that the universe is filled with love. Even more particularly is it hostile to the conceptions set forth in the teaching and death of Jesus. It cannot be denied that it is based on something which is true. One great impulse in life is to master environment, and morality and religion itself lie implicit in this impulse. More than that, even with all his exaggeration, Nietzsche effectively emphasizes the supremacy of the free spirit. But the whole matter centers over the question as to whether this impulse toward mastery is the only impulse in humanity. Nietzsche here is not unlike Rousseau. He finds his standards in the conditions of savagery or low civilization. To him the Germans of Tacitus were superior to the Germans of to-day. That is to say, he would undo the entire work of civilization as tending to the production of the Appollonian or slave morality.

Now it is quite impossible to hold that civilization is degeneration. Granting that "will to power" is a fundamental attribute of life, it seems *reductio ad absurdum* to hold that the moment that power

begins to express itself in the conquest of nature, social coöperation to conquer those things which hold the savage in subjection is weakness. But such coöperation leads inevitably to ethical codes. For over what is power to be exercised? Must it be simply the power of the strong man over other men? May not the highest type of power be expressed in that social coöperation which lies at the basis of civilization and to which Christianity has contributed? We can readily grant that there have been periods in history and that there have been individuals who have so mistaken the call to sacrifice as to make sacrifice an end to itself. But the real gospel is the farthest possible from asceticism, however many Christians may have been ascetics. Christianity has itself a call to power; it has its victories. Only they are the victories not of the physical man but of the spiritual. It complements the impulse to power through conquest by the impulse to power toward harmonization with already existing personal forces.

In such a contrast between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of Nietzsche we are confronting the fundamental antithesis that lies in the world of values. Self-expression and self-development are undoubted goods, and self-development can come only by con-

quest, but the conquest which Christianity insists upon is the conquest over things which are unspiritual and impersonal; those from which civilization constantly tends to free men. It would insist that the power which must come to human life shall be the power which comes through coöperation with the higher forms of life. Primitive Germans conquered nature by killing wild animals; civilized Germans conquer nature by breeding cattle. Primitive man ruled over his fellows by terrorizing them into physical subjection; in the Christian community the individual is brought into subjection through his own coöperation with the social will. The gospel recognizes and rationalizes this principle by insisting that love is a form of social coöperation which involves sacrifice, not in the interest of self-repression, but in the interest of self-development along more potent, more personal, because less animalistic, lines. And it bases its imperative upon its belief in the love of that God whose spiritual life conditions all spiritual living. The two conceptions of power placed over against each other mean simply this: reversion to "civilized" savagery or advance to fraternity.

3. But even on the part of those who are not ready to find in unloving force something which is

superior to good and evil, there is the belief that justice is superior to brotherhood. Here again the question at issue is the very nature of the gospel itself. For the gospel has little to say about justice and very much to say about brotherliness.

The appeal to justice is an exceedingly powerful motive. But it is an appeal that needs to be analyzed. In reality there are two attitudes toward justice, that of getting and that of giving. The impulse to *get* justice is not evangelical; the impulse to *give* justice is. The great command that Jesus lays upon his followers is not to have their wrongs righted but to seek to right the wrongs of others. To that end they must be ready to sacrifice, as he sacrificed.

It is easy enough to see that this is not attractive doctrine, and that it cuts across some of the inherited elemental passions of life. Moreover, the average Christian man is sometimes apt to think that when he seeks his own selfish will he is really doing the will of God. But despite the difficulties of realizing its ideal, the emphasis laid by the gospel upon the giving of justice, rather than upon the getting of justice, is consonant with life as we know it. Revolutions have seldom if ever won more rights than the more thoughtful among the privi-

leged persons of the time would have been ready to grant. How much farther did the French revolution proceed in permanent accomplishments beyond the rights which were freely surrendered on August 4, 1789?

Even if this generalization be open to question, it can hardly be denied that to grant a privilege freely in the interest of giving another justice is certainly preferable to a recourse to revolution. But to give justice is brotherhood, and to recognize the imperativeness of such an act is to testify to the worth of the gospel's estimate of sacrifice. Brotherhood is not weakness; it is simply difficult. Yet in the same proportion as men come under the ideals of the gospel does it become operative. Nor does there seem to be any social condition quite beyond its power. Individuals, it is true, may cling to privilege and force on a struggle to get rights. It is true also that time is requisite for fraternal ideals really to become operative through becoming socialized. But gradually in one field after another the practical power of the ideals of the gospel has exhibited itself. Slavery was certainly a serious and complicated problem, yet slavery in the Roman Empire was abolished in the same proportion as Christianity got control of the slave-holding classes. It is

worth while to remember this whenever tempted to think despairingly of the problems set by our present social order.

It may be objected that to get justice for others is altruistic; that the class struggle now in evidence is not a struggle on the part of the leaders for their own rights, but is a struggle on their part for the rights of others. And this is true, but it is not contrary to the gospel. To get justice for others by compelling the over-privileged to give it to them may be the very quintessence of love, and in so far the motives of champions of the so-called unprivileged masses are of a sort with that which the gospel declares to be the very quality of God. The sad thing about the situation is that such champions should be necessary. But that is only to lament the quality of human nature itself. The striking thing is that at all periods in the development of Western civilization there have been men and women who have thus championed the weak at the cost of genuine self-sacrifice. They have not always allied themselves with Christian churches. Ofttimes they have found in the Christian church the very persons whom they had to force to give justice. But such facts do not affect the fundamental position that, in thus seeking to get rights for others by forcing men

to give justice when they were unwilling to be fraternal, such reformers have been embodying the spirit of Jesus himself, and their success is a further argument of the work of the practicability of the gospel message. It is the *imprimatur* of history upon the social teaching of the Good Neighbor on Calvary.

4. Again, there is the ordinary man — and with him now and then the theologian — who believes that the Sermon on the Mount is unworkable.

It is no answer to say that the Sermon on the Mount is not the gospel, for it contains the ideals which the gospel presupposes as the final ideals of the spiritual life it undertakes to beget. If the ideals Jesus taught are altogether beyond realization; if an honest attempt to put them into our social life must result inevitably, and always as in his own case, in overwhelming defeat and sorrow; then it may as well be admitted that they, and the gospel that heralds them as the realization of the final will of God, are unfitted to humanity. No religious message can deserve acceptance that promises only an endless suffering born of ideals perpetually maladjusted to social evolution.

Unless I utterly mistake, it is at this point that the final test of the gospel has been made at different

stages of the history of civilization and it will be at this point that the final verdict will be given in our day. The real issues which the gospel faces lie among the plain people. No esoteric religion has ever been, or will ever be, of any real significance except in the way of tyranny or oppression. Certainly the gospel could never remain the gospel if it once became the exclusive property of an aristocracy. Just as certainly is it true that the rank and file of men are testing the gospel to-day on the basis of its actual efficiency to bring the ideals of Jesus into social life. True, many church members of the older sort fail to appreciate this fact. They still think that precision in doctrinal statement is the vital matter, and in too many cases they are unwilling to take as the sufficient test of loyalty to the gospel a determination to produce among individuals and in society the quality of life of Jesus. They want a confession of belief *about* Jesus as well as a life full of confidence *in* Jesus. But a knowledge of the situation as it exists outside of the existing circles of ultra-ecclesiasticism can lead to only one conclusion ; namely, the rank and file of men have ceased to be interested in the questions of trinitarianism, the substitutionary atonement, decrees, foreordination, or even the infalli-

bility of the Scriptures. Such matters, it is true, are still discussed in church circles and theological seminaries, and by some clergymen, but the flood of interest has passed these questions and looks to the far more vital issue which, without the plain man's knowing it, is that raised by Nietzsche. The maxims of our social life in so far as they are anything more than the luxury of idle moments are maxims dealing with success. The ideal man of to-day is first of all the man who amasses great power by amassing great wealth; in the second place he is the man who amasses power in politics; in the third place he is the man who amasses honor in some profession or non-commercial pursuit. Theoretically the champions of these classes of men justify their ideals in terms of social service. Practically any service that costs much bother or sacrifice is relegated to those who are leading, so to speak, professional vicarious lives supported by men who are pursuing the "will to power."

It must be admitted that our social order as it now stands is not conducive to checking this pursuit of success as the final good. The man who deliberately chooses the vicarious life will find plenty of opportunities to emulate the martyrs even though he may not have the distinction of being

burned alive. The gospel is submitting to the same general test that its followers endure. If it cannot evoke from its followers the coöperative impulse which Jesus calls love; if it cannot stimulate men to choose the higher sets of values rather than the material; in a word, if it cannot be individually and socially redemptive, it will fail miserably.

I cannot see how any fair-minded observer of the history of Western civilization, and particularly the student of democracy, can fail to see that in a broad way the gospel is constantly and successfully pioneering in this precise direction. We are always in danger of judging any great social movement by individuals whom we happen to know. In this fashion some of us who have been unfortunate enough to be thrown into company with hypocritical Christians come to distrust the power of the gospel in our present social order, while others of us, who have been more fortunate in our companions, are more optimistic in our hopes. But experiences of either sort are, after all, misleading when treated as universal. We must take a broad outlook. The questions which we must answer are: In the midst of this struggle for success do we find a rising sense of the rights of the less favored? Is

our interest in the weaker growing more brotherly or are we more tempted to treat them as delinquent or defective pawns in the social struggle? Is the general tone of our social morality rising as regards the care of children, the treatment of women in industry, the insistence on humanitarian care for employees? Is there growing up a larger readiness to consent to changes in some of the structural relations of economic life, for the purpose of democratizing privilege? Such questions as these are not to be answered by impressions drawn from this or that man, but by the study of statistics, of legislation, of commercial ideals, of philanthropy, of education. And such a study, though it be as discriminating as facts demand, will show that the fundamental principles of the gospel in terms of ethical life are increasingly influential.

It is no valid objection to such a hopeful view to say that all this is in the region of ethics, not that of religion. If the gospel is to be condemned for its failure in these fields, it certainly is only fair play to credit it with such successes as it has there achieved. And as a matter of fact the ethics of the gospel is its religion coming to self-realization in social relations. The men and women who are most interested in this social uplift are those who at some point or

other have been touched by the dynamics of the gospel itself. They may be far apart from the churches, but the churches and the gospel are not identical. More than that, the churches themselves are growing more evangelical. The power of the vicarious life is greater to-day than ever before. Jesus may be less thought of as the second person of the Trinity suffering upon the cross to make feudal satisfaction to a feudal God, but he is none the less increasingly thought of as the "strong son of God, immortal love," who took upon himself our infirmities, shared the bitterness of our industrial order, endured the buffetings of sinful men, paid love's penalty to religious bigotry, and, through the faith which he evokes, draws men to his own ideal of vicarious life as that of God Himself.

It is only corroboration of this view when we see the gospel powerful in individual lives. What triumphs it has won over debased souls! Drunkards and liars, prostitutes and thieves, yes, even hypocritical sinners of so-called respectable classes, who would otherwise be found among the miserable outcasts denied admission to the New Jerusalem, have been transformed by its power and made fellow-heirs with the saints of all the ages! We sometimes say that the age of great religious

revivals is past, but the facts give the lie to the assertion. The past few years have seen not only innumerable revivals of the type men said were no longer possible, but they have seen also an extraordinary response the world over on the part of individual men and women to the appeal of Jesus for that sort of life which he himself lived. Evangelism itself is being filled with the social spirit. If we admit, as I believe we must, that as yet the life of Jesus cannot be lived in our social order without self-sacrifice, we must also admit that the socialization of the gospel is proceeding, and that the plain man finds it easier to-day to embody the principles of Jesus than he did ten years ago. This I admit is a statement that must bear the test of facts. I make it not hastily, but in view of what seems to me to be the indubitable evidence of the new appropriation of the gospel by the men of to-day. Give the tendencies everywhere discoverable another decade of development, and its truth will be less open to question.

5. There is also the rising school of radicals who believe that the gospel's ideals were not intended for the historically developing social order, but were intended to serve *ad interim* during the bitter period when the followers of Christ awaited his re-

turn to establish his new kingdom. Such an opinion is based upon the assumptions that the catastrophe which was to inaugurate the kingdom was an essential element in the thought of Jesus as well as of his disciples, and that his teachings were intended to set forth the way in which the expectant Christian should bear the buffetings of an outrageous age. Any attempt, therefore, to develop such *ad interim* ethics into a permanent ideal is judged possible only by reading back into the New Testament conceptions of which Jesus and his apostles were altogether innocent.

The seriousness of such a position as this is obvious. If Jesus and his apostles were not concerned with fundamental questions of humanity, but only with a *modus vivendi* pending the speedy coming of the kingdom from heaven, then it is impossible to see how their words can be of any lasting significance. They pass from the company of the great teachers of all time into that of visionaries whose visions were false.

Such a position will seem to the average man highly improbable, and indeed it may be to some extent avoided by holding that the fundamental thought of Jesus as to the fatherliness of God still holds good, notwithstanding his specific ideals of

society. But such a defense is as questionable as the reduction of Jesus to an ecstatic enthusiast. A Jesus that lacked moral uniqueness, who was never raised from the dead, who taught only *ad interim* ethics and was essentially an ecstatic, is not likely to be of vital significance to the modern world, even though he may have taught the fatherliness of God.

Yet the position has none the less sufficient justification to deserve attention. There can be little doubt that the belief in the speedy return of Jesus to establish his kingdom did to some extent affect the social teaching of Paul. He believed that the conditions under which the church existed were temporary. He did not consciously plan for distant posterity because he did not believe there was to be any distant posterity. The age was to be suddenly closed, and a new age was to be introduced. Between the two there was no genetic relation outside the community of the saved, that is, the church. But, as we have already endeavored to show, such views in the case of Paul are practically lacking in the teaching of Jesus. Such traces of them as remain in the oldest stratum of the gospel are incidental, and to make them the controlling factors from which to estimate the social ideals of Jesus is utterly to distort the perspective of the gospel. The same is in

large measure true of Paul. *Ad interim* ethics is undoubtedly present in the apostle's letters to the Corinthians; but it is not the gospel and he never regarded it as the gospel. It was simply directions as to how men who believed in the gospel should live. The expectation of the speedy coming of Christ was to be disappointed, at least in any such sense as would satisfy the content of the expectation; but the new life of the spirit which was induced by faith in Jesus as Christ was not subject to any *ad interim* regulations. That new life was the eternal life.

Any fair interpretation of the gospel must not over-emphasize the prominence of the catastrophic element in the early Christian thought. Sooner or later, as the novelty of the catastrophic idea passes, we shall see that in the ideals of individual and social life contained in the gospel we have what is permanent. Both Paul and Jesus, but particularly the latter, looked across the great chasm which was to separate the one age from the other and centered attention upon the quality of life which, beginning in the present age, would reach fullest element in the coming age. Such ideals may be criticised as too high for the social order as we know it, but they cannot fairly be criticised as not intended for the present age. The gospel was for real men and

women living in an evil age. The universal feeling of the race has not been altogether wrong in its perception of the dominating influence of Jesus. Two millennia of experience cannot be thrust aside by an academic overestimate of certain elements in the life of the early Christians.

6. Finally there is the fundamental opposition of the non-religious modern man to the spiritual order.

We have in our discussion, it will be recalled, restricted the term "modern man" to those who have religious interests, and with whom therefore the gospel has common ground. But such a classification, while justifiable, needs to be supplemented by the recognition of the influence of modern men of a different type. It is one of the paradoxical characteristics of history that the forces of illumination and of culture often depreciate not merely Christianity as a body of formulated doctrines, but that fundamental faith in the supremacy of the spirit which Christianity presupposes. This conflict between the two orders of life, the order of physical nature and the order of the spirit, was never more sharply waged than to-day.

The representatives of naturalism fall roughly into two classes: those who are dominated by a

materialistic interpretation of nature and those whose devotion to idealistic relations is æsthetic.

If a plebiscite of men of science were undertaken, it would probably show a majority in favor of non-mechanical interpretation of the universe. Doubtless this majority would be not committed to evangelical Christianity as such, although on this point anything like trustworthy statistics are unobtainable. But in the world of science minorities are often a potent leaven, and their influence extends beyond the limits of statistics. The influence of a man like Haeckel is far wider than among the men of science who accept his findings, for it has extended out into the great public and is exhibited throughout the world in the establishment of clubs. The members of these clubs believe themselves thoroughly modern and among them are many who discount all religion, and Christianity in particular. Similar is the case of many men who, although of no particular intellectual attainment, have been caught in the general spirit of revolt against the past and pride themselves on a general negative attitude as regarding religion. Men and women of such temper who have also become Marxian socialists are very apt to be bitter in their assaults upon Christianity.

Again, there is the other class of modern men whose interest is particularly in the more æsthetic aspects of culture. They are, of course, in sympathy with the general scientific position, but they are particularly concerned with matters of literature and art. To a considerable degree they are the modern representatives of the men of the Illumination and the Renaissance. It would be difficult to discover how far such polite interest in the world is atheistic, but so far as it is expressed in poetry and in essays it certainly could not be characterized as evangelical. Generally speaking, it is indifferent rather than positive. If its representatives would so far yield to the theological pressure as to become interested in the formulation and justification of religious belief, very possibly some of them might be brought to sympathy with Christianity. Their influence, however, like those of the more pronouncedly scientific propagandists of non-religion, is steadily being felt and is certain to be extended still farther unless it is met by an intellectually satisfactory apologetic. In so far as the influence of these two types of modern men is unopposed by an evangelicalism that agrees with them in accepting the findings of modern science, it will injuriously affect the modern men of the more religious

type; for it represents a current in life which must be opposed if it is not to be supreme.

The things which are not seen, humanity believes, are eternal, but they need constant vindication. We need to show to modern men of this anti-religious type that the Christian thinker does not hesitate to accept the challenge of those who deny the validity and finality of the spiritual order. For it is this denial, whether positive or involved in religious indifference, that threatens our modern world. The enormous development of material resources; the mad search for pleasure; the growing and in some cases intentional paganism of a society that once called itself Christian, — all are among the startling phenomena of our day. And yet idealism has not been crushed out. Again and again it has risen from its tomb just as its executors were celebrating its death. So it is to-day. The very pressure of the materialistic forces of civilization has served to bring to the forefront the new idealism. And this new idealism is an ally of the gospel, even though in many cases it hesitates to affirm some of the elements, particularly the historical, of the gospel which we have formulated. It could not be otherwise, for it is steadily developing and recognizing that attitude of faith which the gospel presupposes. In the case

of a man like Eucken this alliance is explicit. But whether explicit or not every believer in evangelicalism, as contradistinguished from an ecclesiastical orthodoxy, should welcome its assistance and be ready to show that what it sets forth in terms of an interpretation of the universe, Christianity also exhibits in the specific experiences of Jesus and the men of Christian faith.

These various forces which assault the reasonableness and practicability of the gospel are, unfortunately, too often ignored or minimized by the defenders of evangelical faith. Such a procedure is greatly to be deplored. Even though it may be true that men are seldom argued into religion they are certainly often argued out of it. To say that such anti-religious feeling is the expression of moral difficulties, or, as it is sometimes put by earnest religious men, that doubt implies sin, is to deepen the chasm between the church and those modern men who are already anti-religious, and to make more difficult the task of the religious modern man who wishes to maintain loyalty both to the modern world and to the gospel. It is true that it is not necessary for men to go through the agony of religious doubt in order to come into the health of religious faith, but to assert that persons passing through the process of theological reconstruc-

tion are sinful is a fatal mistake. A rational apologetic at this point is as much needed to-day as it was at the time of Justin Martyr or Paley. The fact that the battleground and weapons have changed should not lead us to minimize the fact that the battle is still on, and that it has passed from the outposts to the very fortress of religion itself. As to the final outcome we can have no doubt, but it is the part of wisdom to see that the battle is not prolonged and that the forces of the enemy are not increased by the defection of overdisciplined or wrongly trained defenders.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

To meet objections to the practicability of the gospel is, however, to leave the matter only negatively considered. At the best we have thus showed only that in the past it has proved efficient. The real question is whether it contains within itself an authoritative appeal which can so transform men of to-day as to do for them what it did for their less scientific predecessors who lived in less complicated social conditions.

But the word authoritative does not mean external compulsion. Our discussion thus far will have been utterly misunderstood if the impression should have been made that the gospel is of the nature of dogma. Jesus does not need any vote of ecclesiastical majorities to establish his truthfulness. To attempt to apply the gospel in our present age is not simply to bring over from the past that which must be believed under penalty; it is rather to attempt to give control to the impulses of the spiritual life by the use of facts that have both historical

and religious significance, and also by the use of principles and ideals which the experience of the Christian community have shown to be reasonable and morally effective. The authority of the gospel lies not in the presuppositions with which it is approached, but in its capacity to evoke the response of the spiritual life. It has the energy of the ideal and not the command of the decree.

I

1. What is that salvation which the gospel of the New Testament asserts can be brought to individuals? We have defined it negatively as deliverance, in New Testament terms, from Satan, sin, and death, and in the modern equivalent as deliverance from physical necessity, from the backward pull of the vestiges of past stages of development surviving in the individual and society, and from the collapse of the process of physical development in death. But we have seen also that the gospel promises more than mere rescue. Rescue is only the converse of that positive deliverance which is in terms of transformed and triumphant personality, raised by fellowship with God into superiority to the impersonal world of nature and the less personal forces that lead to sin. How distinct this is in the teaching of Jesus must be

clear to every one who attentively studies the oldest strata of the gospel records. The later editors of these strata may have been dominated to a higher degree than Jesus by a conception of a catastrophic deliverance, but they were not content to describe even this great event of the future as merely a rescue. Jesus did more than throw out a life line; he releases a life force in every soul that trusts him. The teachings of Jesus as revealed by sympathetic criticism are fundamentally in terms of life. There is not a suggestion of self-repression in his words. His teaching as to sacrifice is a teaching of the subordination of a secondary, impersonal, to a primary, personal good. Physical life may well be lost to gain a spiritual life like that of God.

It can hardly be necessary to point out that this spiritual life, to the full attainment of which the gospel points the way, does not necessarily involve any peculiar psychology, such as sometimes masks itself behind the word spirit. Nor is it an abstraction gained by eliminating concrete qualities. It is rather a transformed life itself, the equivalent in our modern thought of the eternal life of which Jesus so frequently spoke. For eternal life with Jesus is neither a new vital quantum nor yet a mere continuation of the life one lives before death. The history of the term

cannot be shaped up from a philological analysis of a Greek word. It is one of the aspects of a socialized concept, the already familiar messianic hope. The gospel presupposes those two ages which formed so essential an element in the messianic program; "this age" full of misery and oppression of the righteous, and "the Age to come" when the kingdom was to be established, the will of God was to be perfectly done, and joy was to be the eternal possession of the Christian. Everlastingness is involved in this life because the Age is never to end, but it is only one of its elements. When Jesus and the apostles looked forward to the Age-life they looked forward not to a primitive conception of the reëmergence of the interests of the physical life, but, as we can now see, to a higher type of life, in which there was to be not only a continuation of that evolution of individuality we already can trace, but a blessed improvement upon everything physical. The conflict between the natural and spiritual orders — that is what the two ages of Christian messianism pictured; the joyous triumph of the spiritual life in the spiritual order — that is the blessedness of the kingdom of God.

To attain to this spiritual life is to be saved. Its elements, or at least its potencies, are already resident in the human personality, but need to be made

supreme in self-realization and self-expression. This can be possible only as a man is volitionally at one with an environing God from whom he has been separated by sin. Such a radical change, however, is possible only as one chooses to make paramount the values of the spiritual life, or, as Jesus would say, repents and seeks the eternal life of the kingdom of God. The full establishment in one's living of such a perspective of values in itself constitutes salvation, for it is to have one's entire personal existence controlled by the timeless ideal of love like that of the eternal God. A personality controlled by the impulses of the physical life, by devotion to things which are temporal, like property or the physical life itself, in the very nature of the case is not saved. It is degenerating and reverting to impersonal living. As Jesus himself taught, in seeking to save that which is temporal and physical men neglect and lose that which is spiritual and eternal. It is a grievous mistake which some of our moral teachers are making when they push the enjoyment of eternal life over beyond death. From the point of view of the gospel man will never be more immortal than he is now. He is already either living the life of the flesh or the life of the spirit. He is already "dead" or "risen." That is the very keynote of the teaching of Jesus.

In his devotion to those timeless values he sacrificed everything that was temporary — family, occupation, comfort, life itself. In him and in his followers the eternally personal elements triumphed even in a world of time over impersonal and sinful forces.

Inexplicable as some of the elements of this salvation through the victory of the timeless spiritual life are, we still can see that it is true to the fundamental principle of life itself. For it demands not only external conduct, but an actual adjustment of one's personality to the spiritual world of God. Regeneration is no mere technical term. Morality is sanctified into blessedness by the more complete personalization of the man who chooses to trust and rely upon God, the Absolute Reason, who is also Love.

We have not sufficiently recognized the supreme place of this completer personalization of humanity in the teaching of Jesus, for we do not really understand his message until we see that the deliverance which he promises is accomplished by such a transformation of life from the tyranny of change to the freedom of eternal values. The tyranny of natural forces, it is true, can still be exerted over the impersonal elements in our being. God can crush us in earthquakes and avalanches, but in so doing he is not working within the sphere of spirit. He treats

us personally only as He loves and saves us. The eternal life which Jesus would have men attain is that which Plato dimly pictured in his Ideas, and poets have sung in their noblest visions of the true worth of the human spirit. Mankind is saved from natural forces both without and within itself by a divine fellowship that raises the human soul above them and accustoms its activities to the primacy of such immaterial eternal goods as faith and justice and love.

2. The teaching of Paul is the same. Our theologies have preferred to shape themselves along the interpretative, forensic thought of the apostle, but in the light of the historical approach to his gospel we are coming to see that what Paul was most interested in was personality that had reached self-expression in the new spiritual order revealed in Jesus. Alongside of his striking exposition of the messianic future in which the believer was to share, is his less rigorous, less systematic, but profoundly more dominating conception of the life in Christ. Even if it is not possible to reduce many of these personal conceptions of Paul to exact definitions, with him as with Jesus they are finalities of experience. The renewed impulses of the Holy Spirit; the new loyalty evoked by the Christ; the enthusiasm born of a great

hope; the sublime indifference to creature comforts wherever they were in contrast with the goods of the spiritual personality, — all these are the very heart of Paulinism. The centering of thought upon formal Paulinism has given us traditional orthodoxy and a misinterpretation of the cry of "Back to Christ." The centering of thought on these personal, vital elements of the apostle's teaching will give us that dynamic religion of the spirit which is the real contribution of Jesus to human history. Even a superficial knowledge of the history of doctrine corroborates such a statement. A Christianity without conviction is powerless, but a Christianity that has shifted the center of interest from supreme personal values to ecclesiastical conformity; that prefers plans of salvation to salvation itself; that raises definitions of the "natures" of Jesus above moral surrender to the joy-giving Saviour; has always bred the spirit of persecution. How pathetic is the history of the church in those moments when, refusing to see that the only thing which Jesus and Paul really demanded is spiritual likeness with God as exhibited in Jesus, it has attempted to find its ultimate goods in enforced conformity to some philosophy masquerading as a gospel.

We need to distinguish frankly between evangeli-

calism in the true sense and orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is an authoritative formulation of what certain ages and men believed was the content of evangelicalism. It is an evidence of the existence of convictions, but not necessarily the existence of convictions as to the supremacy of the gospel itself. We need to replace the orthodoxy which Protestantism inherited from Rome with the evangelicalism of Jesus and Paul. The modern man sees this far more plainly than those men who prefer the authority of councils and Popes and tradition, no matter by what name they may be called, to the authority of the Jesus who evoked faith in himself as God. And in thus recognizing the "power of eternal life" he is more at one with the gospel than perhaps he thinks.

II

1. From the point of view of psychology this power of the gospel to bring spiritual forces into human experience is due in part to its ability to arouse faith in the God of Jesus. But faith, as every Christian knows, is something more than mere assent to creeds or anti-creeds. It is the making of conviction the basis of conduct. In the very nature of the case such response of the soul to what it holds to be truth is a released impulse. The worth of its outcome will

depend upon how far the ideal by which the impulse is directed and given content is in accord with reality. Superstition is the bastard brother of faith. For that reason if for no other it is the duty of Christians to be able to give a reason for the hope that is within them. The gospel when once accepted becomes a constant source of suggestion tending to rule the personality in its self-expression. In the same proportion as we consistently embody the impulse born of the evangelistic suggestions that God is love, that men may be saved by loyalty to Jesus, that life is more than living, and that goodness, service, and immortal worth are within the grasp of each of us, do we live the true spiritual life of faith. Our entire discussion has failed if it has not appeared that such an act of faith, born of the acceptance of the gospel as reasonable and of Jesus as something more than a picture, is rational.

At this point, in terms of mere psychology, Christianity is at one with every great religion. Each has its elemental proposition which become the sources of impulse. The difference between religions lies in the content of the germinal teaching. The gospel and the message of Mahomet, for instance, both inspire their followers with enthusiasm. The chief difference between them at this point lies in the

quality of life which the enthusiasm of Christians and Mohammedans engenders. The Koran nerves men to absolute self-repressing devotion on the battle-field when Allah's will is only to be accepted. The gospel has stirred innumerable men to service to their kind as missionaries and social workers, under the enlightened impulse toward spiritual freedom. However much the modern man may doubt the power of the gospel to affect his own life he cannot fail to see that it has modified the lives of others. And the marvelous thing is that it has been able to survive the various theories and practices, the theologies and philosophies with which it has been mediated to men. Indeed, one might almost say that the greatest evidence that divine power is resident in the gospel lies in the fact that the vagaries of its devotees have not neutralized its influence.

2. It is self-evident that the saved life as presented in this gospel is moral, but it is not moral in the sense that it is under compulsion from without. The gospel is not a new law; it is a new power which enables the human soul to adjust itself into harmony with God and man. That is the central thought of Jesus and Paul. The commandment had been superseded; law had been supplanted by spiritual imperatives as the slave that led the child to school was

supplanted by the self-direction of the mature man. However much a man needs that moral discontent born of a knowledge of sin, his spiritual life is not brought into self-expression by fear. It is evoked by Jesus. Released as far as human will can release from subjection to sin, it is raised into newness of life by a surrender to Jesus. That is the attraction of the cross to those whose eyes are not closed that they may not see. We love him because he first loved us. And to love him is to try to be like him.

In the very nature of the case no other motive is so powerful because none is so normal. Love, not fear, awakens love and casts out fear. The spiritual life cannot be terrorized. It is free. And this freedom of the sons of God is never violated by Jesus or the Spirit. The life that embodies that fruit of the spirit embodied in Jesus and evoked by a knowledge of him, has passed into a region of free personal self-expression above statutes. Here is the conception of the real superman of which the Nietzschean is a distortion. The free spirit is he whose impulses are controlled and directed by an ideal that is the anticipation in history of humanity's goal. And that is the very paraphrase of Christian faith. For that ideal is Christ.

3. Spiritual liberty, however, is not without its

laws. But they are those of personal relations. That makes the difference between liberty and license on the one hand and liberty and compulsion on the other. In its self-expression the spiritual life, as the gospel always insists, is conditioned by relationship with other spiritual persons, and above all with God. God is the final authority because He is the final reality. For our spiritual health demands that we conform and submit to His Will however it may be discovered.

The gospel does not insist on merely subjective judgments of values. They might lead to anarchic confusion. Its fundamental thought is that the man who undertakes to make its message regnant in his life by his response to Jesus develops such an attitude of reconciliation with God that through it he finds moral direction. It leads men to the Light and the Light becomes the minister of life. Therein lies the possibility of a community of the Spirit, the true Democracy of which men dream, in which men are brothers rather than subjects. Therein lies also spiritual, not outer authority. As brotherhood is the outcome of sonship, spiritual living is to be controlled in its self-expression by loyalty to the new life itself as determined by its environment of God. As a man grows artistic in company with artists does he grow

spiritual in company with God. "His seed is in him and he cannot sin;" that is the simple psychology of the Spirit. "As many as live by the Spirit, by the Spirit also walk;" that is its all-embracing imperative. The spiritual life does not originate such an imperative; it comes from a personal situation wherein is God willing to do His own good pleasure. In its interpenetration with the Absolute Person the human spirit reaches freedom in obedience. It reaches freedom because its self-expression is determined by perfectly personal relations and therein is the only freedom it should ever want or ever can have. It reaches obedience because if there be a God in the universe and if we undertake to put ourselves in a personal relationship with Him He must be supreme or He is less than we. Truth does not save; God saves men who — sometimes unexpectedly — in the search for truth and in the honest attempt to embody truth, find Him and yield to Him as a God. A religion with simply a god-idea is a religion fit only for a solipsistic world — whatever that might be.

In this recognition of the authority and the moral liberty that alike come from loving personal relations with God, the gospel is true to what we know of religion itself. For if one were to analyze religion to

its very elements it would appear that its germ, so to speak, is in the elemental impulse of life to protect itself. Only in religion this protection is sought by getting help from environment, or some one of its elements conceived of personally. Man finds himself at the mercy of the world in the midst of which he lives. He extends over to it his highest ideals born of his experience of persons, then seeks to make the environment thus conceived helpful. He seeks to make it friendly by being friendly with it. In fact, with a little modification of Schleiermacher's words religion might be defined as an attempt to reconcile and so make helpful the superhuman personal environment upon which mankind feels itself dependent. Prayer is to religion what experiment is to science.

Such a definition, it is true, may appear formal and abstract, but the study of religions will readily give it content. The impulse to gain help from a personal God upon whom men find themselves dependent is always operative. There is, it is true, a tendency in some quarters to substitute social ethics for religion and to make the performance of duty an equivalent for prayer. But such transformation is really contrary to the elemental and determinative characteristics of human nature. The gospel is fundamentally in accord with life itself when it re-

fuses to eliminate the reconciling process. It makes the relationship of reconciliation the very center of its message, the Cross the symbol of its triumph. More than this, knowing Jesus it knows that God is ever ready to help, and has shown how He can help and would incite men to seek His help. It clears away all the misinterpretations which less ethical religions have attached to the process of reconciliation by presenting Jesus, the very embodiment of the divine life, functioning as Saviour. It maintains that God, so far from needing to be appeased, is reconciling the world to Himself through Jesus. It denies that there is need of ritual sacrifice and finds salvation in a free personal relationship with God with which all forms of asceticism are grotesquely inconsistent. It finds its moral imperative not in the fear of punishment but in full realization of the Spirit by whom the spiritual life is evoked, strengthened, and directed.

III

A man is not saved — and in the light of our modern knowledge of human nature how true is the word — until he is at one with God. He may indeed be living a conventionally good life; he may be performing acts which, thanks to the imitative habit of mankind, are to all appearances like those

that are the outcome of a genuinely regenerate life; yet at the same time at the center of his being he may be bad.

There are in nature many analogies to this fact of religious imitation. Insects resemble flowers without possessing the life of flowers; animals act like human beings without being human; flowerless plants so shape themselves as to resemble true flowers, without possessing the ability of real flowers to ripen into fruit that shall in turn spring into new life. And in all these cases the essential difference is the same: between the two similar objects there is no identity in life.

There is, of course, another side to the matter. Really good deeds imply a good life behind them. Regeneration is sometimes so subtle a process as to elude consciousness and to be known only by inference. But the principle holds true: the life that is at one with God, that has been transformed by His Spirit into love that is likeness with God — that life only is the right life, the only basis of genuine morality.

It is the old issue again which Jesus raised. Measured by superficial standards, the legalism of an arrogant Pharisee like him who once went up to the temple to pray, was not unlike the joyous activity

of Peter and John, who also went up to the temple at the hour of prayer. But at the heart of things there was, and is, a profound difference. The legalist makes acts the end of life; the gospel makes acts the expression of personality. The one looks to separate deeds that men have agreed to call good; the other looks to a life which must express itself in deeds that are good because they spring from a life that is like God's, because it comes from God. In the very nature of the case, the Christian must champion the new life that blossoms out in impulse and finds fruitage in good deeds. We are not saved because we are good. We are good because we are saved. Good deeds are the result of our new life. The good tree must bring forth good fruit.

There is abundant need that our preachers, waiving all right to pass final judgment on men, should insist on this primary fact in religion. To neglect it, in the interest of an enthusiastic championship of a more superficial morality, is to be untrue to the essence of Christianity itself. We must help make the very center of man's being Godlike. We are not to insist that men should merely copy the deeds of Christ; we are to insist that they shall have the mind, the spirit, the life of Christ. A man is not a

Christian because, like Jesus, he is a carpenter. Honorable as is the calling of honest industry, the sign by which the spiritual life is to conquer is not a wood saw. No more is a man religious because he is an investigator of religion. The anchor that is within the veil is not in the shape of an interrogation mark, but of a cross. And the life that would be genuinely good must be Christlike in its dependance upon union with God. Just as a living organism in the physical world can bear its fruit only as it is in normal relation with its true environment, can the human soul bear fruit of real goodness only in personal dependence upon God. Is not that but another way of saying what Jesus said so beautifully when he declared that he was the vine and that his disciples were the fruitful branches?

For the regeneration of a sinful soul, however little or much its process may be clear in consciousness, however distinct or indistinct may be our understanding of the gracious influences of the Spirit that cause it, is a fact. Some day our psychologists will devote more attention to it. But even when it forms chapters in our text-books, it will be no more real than it is to-day or was in olden times.

Paul was no mean psychologist himself. True, he did not have all the appliances of the modern

laboratory with which to test reactions of nerves. But for moral purposes he had something far better. He had "the mind of Christ." He saw that the new life that comes to the believer in Jesus Christ was something more than a mere unfolding of latent tendencies derived from one's ancestors. He saw that faith in Jesus brought men into vitalizing, transforming relations with God as truly as belief in a radiator as a means of heating one's cold hands brings the warmth of some great central fire to the one who transforms that belief into faith and goes to the radiator for its help.

And he saw something quite as important: that the new life that comes from the presence of God expresses itself in moral impulses that — let us say it with all reverence — are like the moral impulses of God. The fruit of the Spirit was love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness. If a man puts such impulses into action, he is moral. For what else is morality than to live out the new life — the divine life which is really ours because God is working with us? In comparison with such gracious spontaneous morality as this, what can the legalist offer? What, indeed, but the very sort of life against which Paul warned the Galatians!

We are always in danger of judging character by

counting up and comparing the sums of so-called good and evil deeds. We are always tempted to urge men to do things rather than to gain this upspringing impulse that comes from the life with God. But when we look to this easier and often more popular morality we are mistaking the very laws of the universe in which we live. We may tie grapes to thorns and delude ourselves into a genial optimism that we have wrought a miracle. But as long as nature is nature, to raise grapes we must plant grapevines.

The chief business of the preacher of the gospel is not to urge men to be good, but to show them how by coming to and living with God they may become good. Reform springs from regeneration. It can never replace it. The moment our churches confuse the two they are in danger of losing their birthright. We must needs preach ethics, both of the individual and of society; but ethics, like legalism, is not the gospel. The chiefest blessing of the Christian is not the call to do things for God, but the gracious promise that God will do things for and in him.

IV

It is plain therefore that there is nothing magical in the gospel. No man can be saved a bad man.

No man can be saved an unforgiving man. No man can be saved except as a spiritual person. To be saved is to be saved not for something future but to membership in a world which is even now in process toward spiritual ends. The newness of life in Christ is a moral newness which expresses itself primarily in faith energized by love. A man is unchristian in the same proportion that he is selfish. The spiritual man is instinctively social. He wants not the separate star of Kipling, but the Holy City of John. The working of the Holy Spirit is always altruistic. A life in Christ is a life like Christ's. The spiritual life that seeks simply to save itself for the enjoyment of heaven is unspiritual. To cling to the cross may be refined selfishness, but to bear the cross is to let the spiritual life express its true social character in service to others and, what is sometimes vastly more trying, in service with others.

If it were for no other reason than the cost of a life like Christ's, we should be impressed by its seriousness. We are dealing here with the very elementals of personality. Sacraments, theologies, organizations, — all are secondary and functional. The church must be done with magnifying the perimeter of the spiritual life.

Men of all sorts, but particularly modern men, are restless until this elemental life finds its proper environment of truth and God. That is no slight demand, nor one to be ignored in the interests of popularity and statistics. You cannot entertain men into self-denial. Religion cannot be surreptitiously introduced between stereopticon slides. If this life in Christ is mere form, men want to know it. If, as the gospel asserts, it is the only true life, they want it made paramount.

V

It is always difficult to convince the man who has starved his impulse to get help through personal relationship with the God of help, that anything real comes from such a personal relationship as the gospel insists is established by making Jesus supreme in one's life; yet such a person has only to look about him to see how influential such a conception of life is.

The language of experience when once it is loosed from the bonds of conventional phraseology is a language that needs no lexicon. Priam begging the body of Hector, Achilles the wrathful, Ulysses the much enduring, are no strangers to us. We meet them on our streets. The grief that

killed Eli kills men to-day. David's agony of love and remorse leaps still from the lips of fathers. Three thousand years and more have passed since a slave mother would not let her little boy be killed; near four thousand since Jacob toiled seven years twice over for the love he bore his Rachel; but mother love and romance have not yet perished from the earth.

That Christian experience in which men surrender to the Spirit is as much a unit. Men tell their stories in different words, but they mean the same thing. They set forth "plans of salvation" satisfactory enough to themselves but unintelligible to others. They label each other by their differences and forget that God has made all His true children of the same spiritual stock. Yet when they speak in terms of experience they see eye to eye. They realize that their words are of necessity the mirrors of their time, what their teachers have taught them. Strip off this husk and they will find within the whole family of God something common to the Christian centuries — the salvation of a soul as it turns to God revealed in Jesus Christ.

A wayward genius in the agony of remorse opens the Bible for a message. The first verse upon which his eye falls is to him the word of God. His

life is changed and out from the heart of his passionate metaphysics Augustine cries: "Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee." A brilliant young man of twenty-one is riding through the forest of France to join in one of the castle stormings of the Middle Ages. He knows that his work lies elsewhere than among wild adventures, but he persists in his rebellious mood. In the midst of the forest he comes suddenly upon a church, God's voice in stone. And Bernard the adventurer, the future Bernard of Clairvaux the Saint, like Saul of old, falls from his horse and there on his knees in the wayside chapel "he lifts up his hands to heaven and pours forth his heart like water in the presence of the Lord." A gay man of thirty lies on his couch composing a love sonnet. A vision of the Holy Virgin stops his pen. He tries again. Again the Virgin. He yields to the vision, and Raymond Lull the man of the world becomes Raymond Lull the martyr to trinitarianism among the Moslems. A German student is overtaken in a thunder shower; the lightning strikes at his feet. "Help! Anna, blessed Saint! I will be a monk," he prays. It is the beginning of the deeper religious life of Martin Luther.

And so again and again it happens. Every man, be he great or commonplace, meets the saving God in a different way. Christians tell their stories in different words, but their experience is at bottom the same. These men could never have agreed in every item of doctrine, but they all experienced God as they saw Him redemptively revealed in Jesus. That is the eternal equivalent, nay the very content of the messianic valuation of the first Christians.

Definitions, however, must here yield to words that symbolize without limiting appreciation. The more simply such appreciation is voiced, the easier do one man's words become the prophecy of another. Our great hymns are the pledge of a common life in Christ. A Unitarian wrote "In the cross of Christ I glory"; a Roman Catholic wrote "Lead, kindly light"; a Plymouth Brother, "Jesus, thy name I love"; a Congregationalist, "Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts"; an Episcopalian, "There is a fountain filled with blood"; a Methodist, "Love divine, all love excelling"; a Baptist, "He leadeth me"; a Presbyterian boy of ten years, "Jesus and shall it ever be a mortal man ashamed of thee." Yet who of the thousands who daily sing these songs of faith asks or cares whether

their authors agreed in their theories of the atonement or of the trinity?

The conscience-stirring, faith-evoking Jesus of Nazareth, who, amidst the flux of words in which men have tried to explain his person, has, through the centuries, satisfied man's hunger for a knowable, reconciled God, given the perfect revelation of the spiritual life that is eternal, and proclaimed the certainty of the life to come, is an unchanging element of a Christianity that ever seeks to adapt the gospel to a changing order.

If the modern man cannot understand or accept an inherited Christology, he can at least in the depths of his own spiritual life serve the real Person whose redemptive energy doctrine seeks to estimate and enforce. And in serving him he will know the power as well as the struggle of the emancipated, victorious, spiritual life.

CHAPTER X

THE POWER OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

THE modern mind cannot stop with the individual. It must pass on to the extra-individual. We are seeing now as never before that a man is more than he seems to be. Whatever may be our philosophy as to heredity, it is certainly true that every life inevitably responds in one way or another to that environment in which it is integrated. But that environment ceases to be merely external to the life. The two constitute a situation which is not susceptible of absolute analysis, but which must be treated as a unit. The tree cannot live apart from the soil, and the soil lives in the tree.

Similarly in the case of the spiritual life. So dependent is it, as genuine life, upon the social order in which it finds itself as to be inseparable therefrom. That outer world of nature, concerning which we speak so glibly, is truly also an inner world, part and parcel of ourselves. Even more intimate if possible is that world of personality of which we are socially ourselves a part. Change it

and the soul changes. Change the soul and the environment is changed. For both alike constitute that spiritual situation in which we come to consciousness, and which must itself progress toward the kingdom of God.

Such truths as this are not novel. They are simply reëxpressed in terms of a nascent philosophy. Jesus himself taught them when he held forth the kingdom of God as that of which the individual must be a member in order to taste the fullest joy. We have already seen that, eschatological as that hope may have been, it never ceased to be social. However great the difference between the Christian conception of the kingdom of God and the Jewish ideal of the kingdom of saints to be founded at Jerusalem, they are alike in the belief that the final consummation of the deliverance of the individual will be in his fullness of life in an ideal society within which God is supreme.

It is worth while dwelling a moment upon this truth which may seem hardly more than a platitude, for many of the world's great religious teachers have emphasized the necessity of the holy man's withdrawal from human ties, like family and state and business. The celibate, rather than the father, has been the type of sanctity to more than one great

religion. Even in our own world there are those who hold that religion has nothing to do with social problems and that the message of the gospel is exclusively one of the individual's salvation in a world to come.

I

The evangelizing of society will not be without struggle and vicarious suffering on the part of those who dare become its agents.

Our modern world suspects that the gospel is not adjustable to our social life. As has already been indicated in a previous chapter, the modern order which has resulted from the century-long development of civilization sets its special approval upon activity and strength. Its most praised man is the man who wins. Courage, daring, limitless expenditure of oneself and one's possessions, a capacity to control men and to beat one's enemies, — these are the acknowledged virtues of a commercial age. And to a considerable extent they are the virtues of culture. For the man of culture, however much he may sneer at commercialism, has a deep-seated admiration and even a secret envy of the man whose activities find results that are concrete and measurable.

Over against these accepted virtues of our modern

world stands the gospel with its insistence on the primacy of love and its inevitably consequent self-sacrifice. It is little wonder that an age that builds Dreadnaughts should find unintelligible the words of Jesus regarding non-resistance to evil. For how is it possible for an age that honors the victories of force to appreciate, in anything more than an æsthetic way, the victories of the cross?

All this is, of course, only another form of the age-long conflict between the spiritual and the natural orders, of which the gospel is so conscious. The doctrine of the two ages which came over into Christianity as an integral part of its inheritance from messianism is simply an unphilosophical way of looking at a conflict seen by all thinkers since thought began. The world of spiritual values has always been confronted with the world of material forces and standards. But this is a very different thing from saying that the spiritual values as described by Jesus presuppose a world of impassivity. Salvation is not Nirvana. Jesus' call to love is a call to the sublimest heroism. The courage of the Greek is inferior to the courage of the Christian, for physical courage may be simply a recklessness born of a lack of imagination. The gospel's recognition of the supremacy of the spiritual order demands a

spiritual courage. What else is the call of Jesus to his followers to take up their crosses, or of those martial words of Paul with which he describes the armor of the man of God or urges Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith?" The note of conflict runs throughout the entire New Testament. In very truth Jesus cast fire and sword upon the earth. The Christian in his devotion to the life of the spirit faces innumerable enemies to be overcome at all costs. And some of these enemies are of his own economic household.

The most striking evidence of the aggressive power of the spiritual life to defend its own ideals against even internecine assaults is the life of Jesus. He was no more a Nitzschean superman than he was effeminate. While other men have championed spiritual life by the use of unspiritual weapons, Jesus refused success even at the cost of the kingdom of the spirit. If he opposed the unspiritual world of Pharisaism, he did it wholly with the weapons and in accord with the laws of the spiritual order. Hypocrisy, selfishness, pride, insincerity,—these were the sins he attacked in his opponents. His language, extreme as it is, will always be found to emphasize the supremacy of the spiritual.

Now the struggle of our modern day is much

like the struggle of Jesus. The gospel of the supremacy of the spiritual life born of and like that of the God of Love, is confronted by modern Sadducees, who deny the existence of everything beyond the physical world; by modern Pharisees, who are seeking to erect a hedge of dogma about the gospel itself; by commercialized traitors, who wish to make Christianity a propaganda of comfort. Outside of religious affiliations we find the avowed champions of force and materialism and pleasure. All these enemies must be met in strictest loyalty to the motives of the spiritual life, in patience, without misrepresentation or the lowering of spiritual self-respect. But such opposition requires more than mere passive resistance to evil. In the same proportion as the spiritual life is controlled by the ideals of the gospel it will be heroic. The sacrifice to which it calls is that of everything which is unspiritual. Such a conflict demands a heroism vastly more difficult than that of the battle field, and a devotion to the rights of the community far more searching than that of even patriotism itself.

II

It goes without saying that such a conflict cannot be waged in the spirit of academic neutrality.

Among all the constructive forces none is mightier than a socialized hatred of that which is lower than the known best. Good men have always been haters of the bad. Bad men have been haters of the good. As Paul says, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other." Throughout human history great movements have come as men have hated unrighteousness in institutions and practices. No reform or revolution ever was successful on any other condition. It is such hatred which distinguishes the practical reformer who knows good cannot be erected except on the ruins of that which is bad from the doctrinaire. No man ever illustrated this better than Jesus. In him we see not only the ideal champion of everything that is pure and of good repute, but also the irrespressible hater of everything that is low and mean and hypocritical. The possession of this sort of hatred makes love more than good nature. How can a man be devoted to the spiritual life without fighting all that opposes its very existence? He that is not for Jesus is against him.

1. The social power of the gospel will be commensurate with its power to rouse a hatred of sin, — not of sin as a theological abstraction, but of sin as we have seen it actually working its way out in op-

pression and sorrow and personal decay, whether it be in the world of politics or of industry or of the home. The Christian community may not have the impatient hatred of capitalism which gives vigor to socialism, but it must give no quarter to any social institution that makes material surplus supreme, whether it favor the capitalist or the laborer. The Christian cannot be content to hold to ideals; he must fight the enemy of ideals. The sword of the spirit is not for full-dress occasions.

The ability to make such hatred of evil a nucleus for the defense of Christian ideals is to be seen everywhere in our modern life, though not always in the widest possible communities. There is the hatred of the liquor traffic, particularly of the saloon, which has proved itself in concerted action; there is the hatred of the white slave traffic, which is developing into a national movement; there is the hatred of oppression, superstition, and hypocrisy, which, though by no means socialized as yet, is appreciably a nucleus not only of denunciation but of constructive idealism. In all quarters hatred of that which destroys is an ally of that which is helping to build up.

2. It is no reply to such an estimate of the severer side of spiritual life as it appears in the gospel to say that we must be tolerant. Tolerance does not ex-

tend over to sin. The scientific spirit as it touches the religious should not be permitted to take from the modern man his sense of the difference between goodness and badness. For tolerance, even in the region of beliefs, too often is only a euphemism for indifference. Real tolerance is thoroughly consistent with a passionate hatred of everything ignoble and demoralizing. It is well to emphasize this distinction. For the modern man is tempted to look on other people's religious hopes and convictions much as a traveler looks out upon the people of a land through which he journeys. He is an observer, not a missionary. Foreigners do not live as he lives, do not dress as he dresses, but he does not undertake to convert them. Thus in the case of his neighbors. They do not believe as he believes; they do not think as he thinks. But he does not care to discuss matters with them. Let one of them attempt to convert him, and he hardly knows whether to consider the attempt an insult or material for an after-dinner story.

It is a sad mistake to call this attitude of mind tolerance. A man must have moral convictions before he can possess that virtue. Those polite writers who regard religion as a survival of some prehistoric ancestor and prefer devotion to the social organism which they have invented to a God whom they

are attempting to expose, can hardly be expected to appreciate other men's sensitiveness to their attack on those religious convictions that have become the basis of morality itself. Those men who lightheartedly remove these religious bases of definite Christian morality in the name of a scientific method are no more necessarily tolerant than is the surgeon who performs a successful operation on a patient who dies. Even when they are willing that a man should believe something, they do not want him to believe it too vigorously. Yet even they are very apt to be intolerant when they believe their indifference is threatened. The man who holds that he is morally better in proportion to the number of his beliefs is no more rasping in his criticism of critics than is the man who rejoices in his belief that he believes little or nothing. There is no dogmatism so intolerant as that of unbelief.

Tolerance is the child of conviction and love. It never had any other parentage. To believe strongly and yet doubt one's omniscience is no small achievement, but to believe strongly and yet permit a man who does not agree with you theologically also to believe strongly is one of the supreme achievements of the spiritual life. Fanaticism easily becomes a constructive force with fanatics, but the tolerance

that the gospel preaches is a constructive force with men whose work outlasts generations of fanaticism. For, changing the center of interest from doctrine to life, it demands community in the spiritual life which opposes the enemies of that life whoever they may be. It must oppose a philosophy that denies supremacy to the spiritual order in theory, and it must even more vigorously oppose customs, institutions, and privileges that deny it in fact. A man cannot serve God and any form of materialism. The good fight of faith is not a sham battle.

III

The social organ of a spiritual life that is aggressive on both its destructive and its constructive sides is the church.

Christian experience has large social significance only when it is institutionalized. Christianity is not a philosophy, but a movement inaugurated by historical persons. Of necessity it involved its institutions. The church is built upon the foundation of the apostle as truly as that of the prophet. Each of these two servants of the kingdom of God had his message, but the prophet's work was done when he uttered his warning and his exhortation. Men might then make their choice between faith and

unfaith. But the apostle institutionalized his message in the church; therefore has it become a social power.

No social institution is at the present time subjected to more criticism than that of organized Christianity. Particularly is it customary to condemn the church of to-day because of the mistakes of the church of yesterday. And such criticism is not without its justification. The higher the ideals of an institution, the greater harvest of spiritual goods do we rightly demand of it. Any student of history knows only too well how far the church has yielded to the limitations set by the simple fact that its members are human and subject to the laws of social solidarity and process. In all times it has found its methods as well as its teachings conditioned by the state of society in the midst of which it lived. In the same proportion, also, in which it has become identified with the state and has offered opportunity for political ambition has it attracted men of unspiritual type to its membership and often to its leadership.

But such criticism may overreach itself. I am far enough from saying that the church, whether Greek, Roman, or Protestant, has been all that it should have been, but he is a prejudiced critic who fails to see the wonderful contribution which the church, in even

its imperfect institutionalizing of the ideals of the gospel, has made to the development of the spiritual life of the race. Insincere, selfish, bigoted as ecclesiasticism has too often been, cautious as are many of its present leaders in making any genuinely social application of its teachings, it is undeniable that at all times, whether past or present, the church has been morally superior to its age. The modern man who loses patience with it as an institution, who sees only its faults and magnifies its too frequent recurrence to the authority of organization rather than to the authority of the spirit, is untrue to the very conception of historical process by which his thinking is controlled. The church of to-day has its obscurant leaders; its leaders who have lost their bearings; its leaders who are apparently anxious to throw it into bankruptcy; but it is none the less the one great institution of the times which is deliberately endeavoring to socialize the fundamental principles of the spiritual life as they are set forth in the life and teaching of Jesus. It is indispensable in the same proportion as he is indispensable. The modern man should throw his weight into its already awakened life.

Such an obligation is all the greater because the church needs the enlarged social sympathies which

are his. Take our modern world as a whole, and it will be found true that those men and women who are most intent upon social regeneration are those possessed of the modern spirit. But it will be just as true that if their spiritual genealogy could be traced, it would be found to be rooted in the Christian church. It is a sad mistake from the point of view of both the church and of society, to have their broad sympathies and their new perception of social values lost to the Christian community.

In the same proportion as this new social sympathy gives content to the expression of the spiritual life will it be in accord with the real purpose of the gospel. For, restrained by the expectations of the speedy coming of Christ as were the early Christians, their new life, begotten by faith in Christ, had its inevitable social results. Modern Christians will be true to the principle of the gospel when they, too, deal with the organic, rather than the accidental, aspects of the regenerate life. And their great mediums of expression will be the churches themselves.

2. Within the church the hatred of social injustice and sin can be both institutionalized and protected from developing into merely class hatred. Whatever may be said of individual churches the church universal includes all strata of society. In

the same proportion as they realize their real community of life will denominations and schools of Christians divert their energies from internecine warfare to an attack upon those materialistic forces which constitute their common enemy.

The atmosphere of struggle is dangerous to every earnest soul. Hatred of sin if it be not, as in the case of Jesus, subject to the control of love, may lead to hateful dispositions. In making the destruction of abuse and the punishment of oppression a part of his self-expression, a man needs continually to be taught that such negative activity is preparatory to the constructive process along lines of brotherhood. Socialism sees this in part, but the Christian church will find here an outstanding opportunity for social service.

3. The church must stand for the worth of men in all efforts for amelioration. For it preëminently recognizes the fact that such worth is to be found, not in men as they are, but in men as they can become through the making of the spiritual life supreme. Here, if anywhere, do we find the social power of the evangelic message of the eternal life.

The first great requisite of any such spiritualizing of social evolution is a profound sympathy with all those who are distressed in mind, body, or

estate. Like its Christ, the really loving soul bears the infirmities of the social order. Nor is this any easy service. It is one of the anomalies of altruism that it tends to protect itself in its ministrations to others with the callus of professionalism. Nor is this to be indiscriminately condemned. We do not want the physician's sympathy, but his skill. Similarly, all amelioration of the diseases of society, whether they be economic, political, or domestic, must be controlled by an intelligent diagnosis. Unenlightened sympathy may be as injurious in the social world as in the medical.

But this is farthest from saying that the Christian life should not be controlled by sympathy. It has too often been true that the church has been content to save individuals from the world without countenancing the aspirations for greater social justice in this world on the part of the very persons whom it would save in the next. It is always easier to organize crusades to rescue some sacred place from far distant Turks than to liberate the peasantry on one's own estates. It is always easier to move a church to the suburbs than to maintain it as a contribution to the spiritual needs of the slums or the boarding-house district. I am not surprised that men who are devoting their lives to obtaining social justice for the

oppressed should grow impatient of an institution which, while proclaiming the supremacy of the spiritual worth of man, is too often indifferent to customs and institutions which treat men as impersonal cogs in political or industrial machines. We need to learn the great lesson of Jesus that devotion to things of the spirit must express itself as social sympathy in such concrete situations as of citizenship, marriage, industry, and culture.

But in its sympathy with the spiritual needs and possibilities of humanity and in its opposition to everything that is hostile to spiritual worth, the church should not be led into indiscriminate attempts to supplant the work of other social institutions. Its primary interest is not in good sewers, shorter hours of labor, a living wage, and old-age pensions. It is rather in the development of the spiritual life which is threatened by a refusal to grant such rights. But organized religion cannot be indifferent to evils. It cannot substitute a complacent hope as to individuals for an earnest effort to mitigate conditions that limit the number of such individuals more heartlessly than any doctrine of election. The recognition of social solidarity is compelling the modern man to bring the ideals of the gospel into transforming relationship with the

social forces themselves. Thus in its work of ameliorating the condition of those who are suffering from the miseries which have resulted from civilization, the church can often render its best service in coöperation with social institutions like hospitals, organized charities, civic reform. For charity itself is in constant need of being inspired to fasten its eye singly upon the worth of human souls as well as of human bodies. Professional good Samaritans should be helped to preserve the power to sympathize personally with the unfortunate. Impersonal charity is on the road to impersonal sociological technique.

4. If the church is more than a good Samaritan it must undertake to evangelize the great formative forces which are making to-morrow. Only thus can it socialize constructively the spiritual life of its individual members. Social discontent, the upward movement of the wage-earning classes, the rapid consolidation of social classes, the absorbing question of socializing capital, are all to a high degree in danger of substituting economic and even more pronouncedly materialistic ideals for that spiritual impulse which they really embody. To socialize the spiritual life means to spiritualize the formative forces of society by means of individuals trained to social sympathies. But just as truly it

means new legislation, institutions, customs, which embody the spiritual rather than the economic values of men and women; the extension of the principle of atonement to the reconciliation of social classes, as it once reconciled in one body Jew and Gentile; the inspiration of such threatening social forces as the desire for play and amusements.

At this point the function of the church is, perhaps, more clearly seen by the modern man than by the man who has standardized the past. But such men themselves need to be taught that sociology is not the substitute for the gospel. For they are constantly exposed to the temptation to withdraw sympathy from organized Christianity and to live a life of impassioned helpfulness to their world in opposition to what they allege to be only the hypocritical profession of the principles of the gospel. Every doctrine of the Christian church has its social aspect, but most of all those doctrines which center about the ultimate values of the spiritual life — faith and love and Christlike sacrifice for others.

5. The gospel must socialize the spirit of Calvary. Society cannot be saved as it is. It, like the individual, must partake of the death of Christ. Love cannot fully express itself while our social order permits selfishness to succeed. Many an

institution and practice must be ended. Obviously such a putting off of the social "flesh" will not be without cost. Men cling tenaciously to illegitimate possessions, whether they be wealth, privilege, or prejudices, and they abandon them with agony. But abandon them they must as our social order comes increasingly under the sway of ideals of justice and love. History has no clearer lesson. The cry of little children with lives crushed in mills and mines, the mute appeal of ignorant masses forced toward brutishness, the ever louder challenge of women forced from home into depressing industries, will not pass unanswered. Their answer will mean loss. One great mission of the gospel is to educate men to let such loss come as sacrifice rather than as coerced surrender. Such education cannot be accomplished overnight. It presupposes slow-growing social sympathy and wise counsels. But without it social progress will be by revolution rather than by that sacrificial unfolding of love which Jesus illustrated and to which he calls men. If such socializing of the spiritual impulses shall come to compel an extensive reorganization of society, that is only what is to be expected if every knee is to bow to Jesus Christ and the will of God is to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Yet even the prospect of a new social order is not to blind the Christian community to its unspectacular mission to the spiritual life of the individual. There may be regenerate men without there being a thoroughly regenerate society; but a regenerate society cannot be composed of unregenerate men. We need revivals if we are not to need revolutions; children growing up in the fear of the Lord more than juvenile courts; illuminated men more than illuminating programs. And it is the business of the church to see that such men are forthcoming; men of vision, of social sympathy, with consciences trained from childhood to see the moral obligations of corporations and labor unions, each ready to take up his cross and to teach society to take up its cross. Christians need to be taught the virility of such sacrificial life, for they are in danger of being feminized to the point of submission to a *laissez-faire* optimism. Society needs to be taught to share in the adventure of a love which chooses the spiritual in preference to the merely economic. A vicarious tenth must replace the submerged tenth. If Christ-like activity is not socialized, social evolution will pass through a materialistic stage in which there will be a Caiaphas and a Pilate establishing a Calvary in every township.

6. No defeat of the immanent God can be final. That is the supreme message of the gospel. Gog and Magog with all their hosts cannot withstand the God of Law and Love. His kingdom is inevitable. That is the scepter of courage and hope the gospel stretches out to men who are striving to regenerate the social order. They are working together with the God of a process that has a goal, and in the midst of human nature which, with a Christ in it, is salvable. This age can really be made a better age, because God can work through institutions and lives devoted to spiritual good. To doubt this is to doubt that God is immanent in His world and even more to doubt that society is being brought by Him into fuller expression of those higher forces which have already appeared in individuals.

It is here that we see the social significance of the prayer for the doing of God's will on earth which Jesus taught his disciples; of that splendid optimism which lay in the belief that he was the Christ; of that hope which awaited his messianic activity; and of that faith which saw in God not only Creator but Father. To teach men to pray that prayer, to share in that optimism, to be saved by that hope, and to be steadied by that faith is the business of

theology and of the church. We need to pray for the coming of the kingdom no less; but no person can honestly pray that God's will shall be done without undertaking to do it. In the same proportion as Christian men fail at this point will they lose the support of those heroic souls who have given themselves to the furtherance of human weal in full determination to improve our present social order. For the gospel of the spiritual life is greater than the church. Only as the church is a servant of the kingdom has it a right to exist. To doubt that God is working in extra-ecclesiastical efforts at social betterment is to come dangerously near the sin against the Holy Spirit. In the same proportion as we grasp the content of the gospel do we see that God brings in His kingdom by any man who is working in the spirit of Jesus Christ. The history of the fourth and the seventeenth centuries shows lamentably that when the church has centered attention upon doctrinal precision it has become a non-conductor between God and His world. But such centuries as the first and the sixteenth show also that it has been the chief channel through which God has led men forward toward the abolition of unrighteous privilege and the elevation of the worth of human life. The twentieth century is already de-

manding a church that works rather than a church that anathematizes.

Such facts are guideposts to the modern man who has made the gospel his own. Truth can never be established by argument alone; it must work out vitally the peaceable fruits of righteousness in a very real world that will move either toward God or toward Mammon. Such fruits, since they are in accord with God's will, must make the gospel appear more gloriously true and final. Faith without works is not merely dead; it was still-born.

IV

The task of making the spiritual values of the gospel supreme throughout our modern life is made more difficult because of the present transitional situation within the church itself. The fact that the spiritual life must find its expression in accord with elements of culture and other phases of our experience will always serve to bring about divergence of opinion. There never has been a time when all Christians agreed as to all theological formulas in which the gospel should be expressed. The New Testament church had its parties; the church of the first century its innumerable heretics; the Middle Ages its sects and rival schoolmen; the

period of the Reformation its Anabaptists. So, too, the modern world has its divisions between Greek, Roman, and Protestant Christianity, and among Protestants the extraordinary spectacle of innumerable denominations and sects. Yet, incredible as it sounds, all this division and subdivision is an attempt to set forth in some desirable polity and doctrine that which is common to all Christians — faith in Jesus and a consequent newness of life due to fellowship with God.

Of late there has developed a cross division of these historical alignments, notwithstanding the steady movement toward ecclesiastical coöperation between the great bodies of Protestantism. This new grouping is along lines which are determined by the presuppositions with which men come to the exposition of the gospel. On the one side there are Protestants who would have all spiritual life controlled by the formulas of the past, thus standardizing the theological *status quo* which was set in the days of Luther and Calvin and in some cases even in the days of Augustine. On the other hand are men who would make the spiritual life begotten by the gospel superior to a doctrinal conformity, which is only another word for an impracticable uniformity. They seek correct doctrines but not doc-

trinal correctness. They are Modernists within Protestantism. The situation is strikingly like that which existed in the New Testament church subsequent to the appearance of Paul. The primitive Christian insisted upon the maintenance of divinely authorized Mosaic legalism as a part of the new religion. The Pauline group, composed of people whose past was radically different from that of the primitive Christians, insisted that the primary thing was not conformity to God's will as known to the past but to God's will as expressed in what the primitive Christians of Jerusalem themselves believed to be paramount — the new life in the spirit induced by faith in Jesus as Christ.

In our modern world of Protestantism there is the primitive Jerusalem church of doctrinal precision, and there is the Gentile church of the modern mind. Neither can claim to be the superior of the other in point of spiritual life, for each confesses the experiential knowledge that the fundamental element of all faith is the gospel of salvation revealed by Jesus. The real line of cleavage lies in the different values placed upon the doctrinal legalism of ecclesiasticism. One party is perfectly sincere in insisting that there is no genuine Christianity except as men believe in the infallibility and perma-

nent authority of the inspired Scripture, the Nicæan formulas for the person of Jesus and the Anselmic, legal formulas for the doctrine of the atonement. The other party insists that it too would have the truth as it is in Jesus, but that it believes in the inspiration of the Scriptures as the progressive revelation of God's will known in the experience of the spiritual life of God; in Jesus as a unique and individualized revelation of God in history without full pronouncement as to the metaphysical, premundane nature of a Logos; in the necessity of the death of the Christ as an integral part of his vocation as Saviour. Yet to the one party as to the other God has spoken in the regenerate life born of Himself. To both the gospel is a positive, vital message of salvation.

Can these two parties work together within those denominations which still seem economically needed as arms of the army of the Lord? Or shall Protestantism be still further divided at the very moment when it is beginning what seems an epoch-making coöperation of all Protestant forces in the interests of a united front against evil?

If the sane counsels of the Spirit prevail, there can be but one answer to such questions. The two wings of Protestantism can unite in the common

campaign of evangelicalism. To keep for a moment the military figure, let each arm have its uniform, its accoutrements, its organization, its company drillmasters, and its battle flags. But let them remember that they have the same watchword, the same general, and the same Fatherland. Let them fight their common enemy, not each other. We have been for many a year singing that we are marching like a mighty army. It is time to stop marching. The engagement has begun!

Thus we reach the end of our discussion at the very heart of the gospel. The spiritual life is not a social surplus to be enjoyed only by those who have shared in the economic surplus. It is our common birthright as men and our common inspiration as Christians. The gospel is not a philosophy but a revelation of the supremacy of this spiritual life as, perfectly embodied in the historical Jesus, it conquered the unspiritual order embodied in nature, in sin, and in death. In making it the controlling factor in our own spiritual self-expression, we are not following cunningly devised fables; we are not fighting against the constructive Will of an ever evolving universe; we are not committed to words and theories of the past. We are rather repeating

in our day the continuously expanding experience of God as He is known in Jesus. The meaning of that experience we shall make intelligible to ourselves in concepts drawn from our own world-view, but such doctrines thus formed will be but functional. Our children and our children's children will repeat the process as in their turn they seek the equivalents of experience in truths that shall be to them the correlate of reality. But though theologies be renewed in the future as in the past, the gospel as the revelation in time of the eternal verities of God and the human soul will be final. Orthodoxies will replace orthodoxies, but evangelicalism as a loyalty of the spiritual life to Jesus Christ will abide. Modern men will succeed modern men, but he, the Christ, will continue to evoke the faith and adoring love of countless generations. Physical life will end, but the life of the spirit will abide with its Lord who is Spirit. Social orders will replace outgrown social orders, but brotherhood will expand increasingly until the Great Day when Jesus shall be supreme and the successive approaches of the spiritual life toward him as its Type and Saviour shall have culminated in a social order in which sin shall be crushed, Christlike souls shall constitute the Democracy of the Spirit, and God shall be all in all.

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